



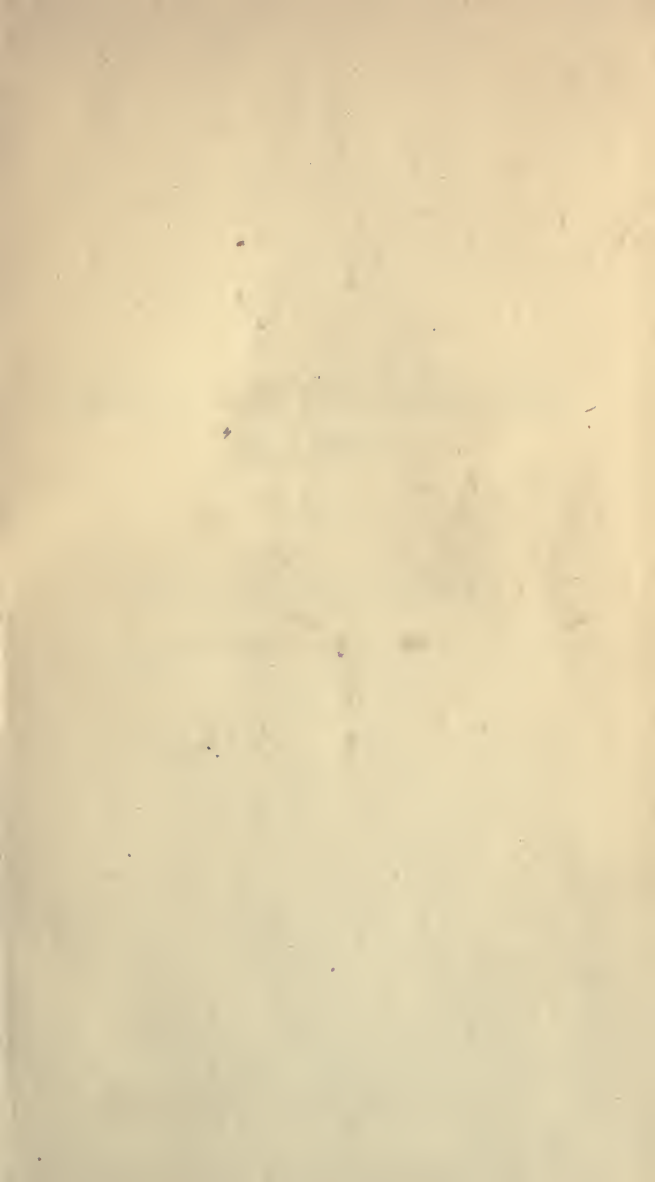
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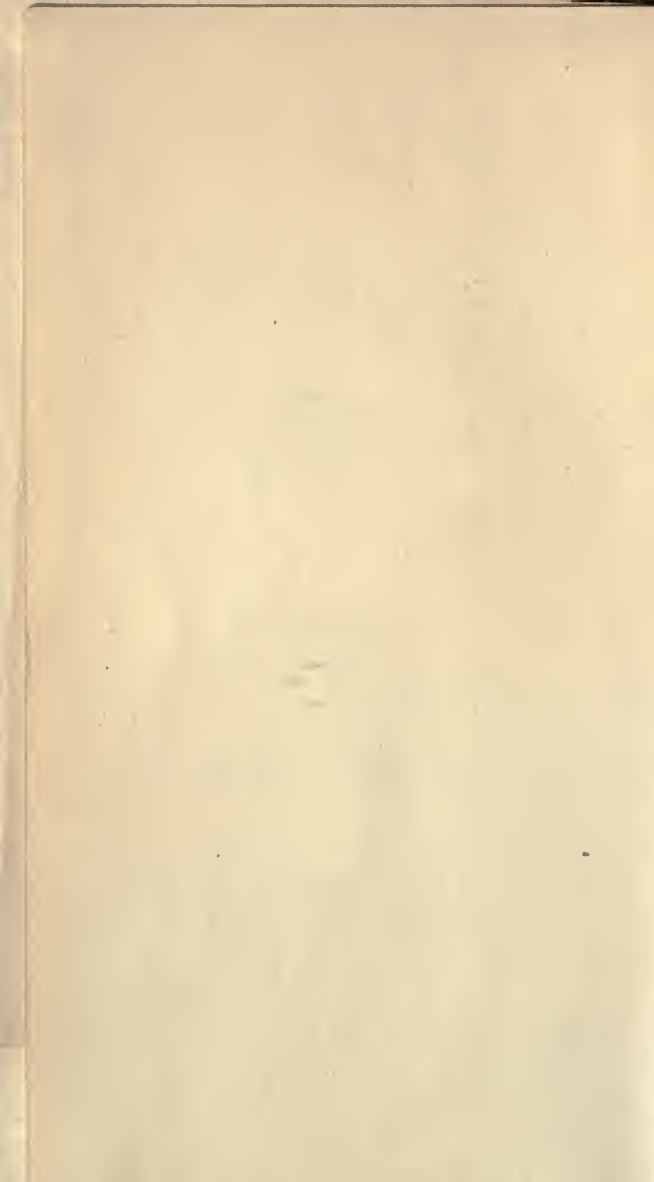


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I

The Vision and the Creed of Piers Ploughman



WITH NOTES AND A GLOSSARY

BY THOMAS WRIGHT M.A. F.R.S. ETC.

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CHARLES WHITTINGHAM
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INTRODUCTION.

THE History of the Middle Ages in England, as in other countries, represents to us a series of great consecutive political movements, coexistent with a similar series of intellectual revolutions in the mass of the people. The vast mental development caused by the universities in the twelfth century led the way for the struggle to obtain religious and political liberty in the thirteenth. The numerous political songs of that period which have escaped the hand of time, and above all the mass of satirical ballads against the Church of Rome, which commonly go under the name of Walter Mapes, are remarkable monuments of the intellectual history of our forefathers. Those ballads are written in Latin; for it was the most learned class of the community which made the first great stand against the encroachments and corruptions of the papacy and the increasing influence of the monks. We know that the struggle alluded to was historically unsuccessful. The baronial wars ended in the

entire destruction of the popular leaders ; but their cause did not expire at Evesham ; they had laid foundations which no storm could overthrow, not placed hastily on the uncertain surface of popular favour, but fixed deeply in the public mind. The barons, who had fought so often and so staunchly for the great charter, had lost their power ; even the learning of the universities had faded under the withering grasp of monachism ; but the remembrance of the old contest remained, and what was more, its literature was left, the songs which had spread abroad the principles for which, or against which, Englishmen had fought, carried them down (a precious legacy) to their posterity. Society itself had undergone an important change : it was no longer a feudal aristocracy which held the destinies of the country in its iron hand. The plant which had been cut off, took root again in another (a healthier) soil ; and the intelligence which had lost its force in the higher ranks of society began to spread itself among the commons. Even in the thirteenth century, before the close of the baronial wars, the complaints so vigorously expressed in the Latin songs, had begun, both in England and France, to appear in the language of the people. Many of the satirical poems of Rutebeuf and other contemporary writers against the monks, are little more than translations of the Latin poems which go under the name of Walter Mapes.

During the successive reigns of the first three Edwards, the public mind in England was in a state of constant fermentation. On the one hand, the monks, supported by the popish church, had become an incubus upon the country. Their corruptness and immorality were notorious: the description of their vices given in the satirical writings of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries exceeds even the bitterest calumnies of the age of Rabelais or the reports of the commissioners of Henry the Eighth.¹ The populace, held in awe by the imposing appearance of the popish church, and by the religious belief which had been instilled into them from their infancy, were opposed to the monks and clergy by a multitude of personal griefs and jealousies: these frequently led to open hostility, and in the chronicles of those days we read of the slaughter of monks, and the burning of abbeyes, by the insurgent town's-people or peasantry. At the same time, while the monks in revenge treated the commons with contempt, there were numerous people who, under the name of Lollards and other such appel-

¹ See the *Apocalypsis Goliæ* and other pieces in the Poems of Walter Mapes; the Order of Fair Ease in the Political Songs, and the Poems of Rutebeuf; and, in English, the remarkable "Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II." in the appendix to the Political Songs. The Poem entitled the Order of Fair Ease bears some resemblance to the *Abbaye de Theleme* of Rabelais.

lations,—led sometimes by the love of mischief and disorder, but more frequently by religious enthusiasm,—whose doctrines were simple and reasonable (although the church would fain have branded them all with the title of heretics),—went abroad among the people preaching not only against the corruptions of the monks, but against the most vital doctrines of the church of Rome, and, as might be expected, they found abundance of listeners. On the other hand, a new political system, and the embarrassments of a continued series of foreign wars, were adding to the general ferment. Instead of merely calling together the great feudal barons to lead their retainers to battle, the king was now obliged to appeal more directly to the people; and at the same time the latter began to feel the weight of taxation, and consequently they began to talk of the defects and the corruptions of the government, and to raise the cries, which have since so often been heard, against the king's "evil advisers." These cries were justified by many real and great oppressions under which the commons, and more particularly the peasantry, suffered; and (as the king and aristocracy were too much interested in the continuance of the abuses complained of to be easily induced to agree to an effective remedy), the commons began to think that their own interests were equally opposed to those of the church, of the aristocracy, and of the crown, and amidst the other popular

doctrines none were more loudly or more violently espoused than those of levellers and democrats. These, though comparatively few, aggravated the evil, by affording a pretence for persecution. The history of England during the fourteenth century is a stirring picture; its dark side is the increasing corruption of the popish church; its bright side, the general spread of popular intelligence, and the firm stand made by the commons in the defence of their liberties, and in the determination to obtain a redress of grievances.

Under these circumstances appeared PIERS PLOUGHMAN. It is not to be supposed that all the other classes of society were hostile to the commons. The people, with the characteristic attachment of the Anglo-Saxons to the family of their princes, wished to believe that their king was always their friend, when not actuated by the counsels of his "evil advisers;"² several of the most power-

² This sentiment was perpetuated in a numerous class of ballads, in which the monarch is represented as thrown incognito among the lower classes, as listening to their expressions of loyalty and to the tale of their sufferings. See the "Tale of King Edward and the Shepherd" in Hartsorne's *Ancient Metrical Tales*; "The King and the Barker," in Ritson's *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*; "The King and the Miller," and "King Edward IV. and the Tanner of Tamworth," in Percy's *Reliques*; &c. The earliest known form of this tale is the story of "Henry II. and the Cistercian Abbot," printed from Giraldus Cambrensis in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. ii. p. 147.

ful barons stood forward as the champions of popular liberty; and many of the monks quitted their monasteries to advocate the cause of the reformation. It appears to be generally agreed that a monk was the author of the poem of *Piers Ploughman*; but the question, one perhaps but of secondary importance, as to its true writer, is involved in much obscurity.³ Several local allusions and other circumstances seem to prove that it was composed on the borders of Wales, where had originated most of the great political struggles, and we can hardly doubt that its author resided in the neighbourhood

³ It was at least a tradition early in the sixteenth century (for we have no means now of ascertaining whether there were any substantial grounds for the statement), that the author was named Robert Longlande (or Langlande), that he was born at Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire, and that (after receiving his education at Oxford) he became a monk of Malvern. I do not think, with Tyrwhitt and Price, that the name *Wil*, given in the poem to the dreamer, necessarily shows that the writer's name was *William*; and still less that the mention of "*Kytte my wif*" and "*Calote my doghter*" (p. 395 of the present volume), and of the dreamer's having resided at Cornhill refer to the family and residence of the author of the poem. If he were a monk (as appears probable, by his intimate acquaintance with the Scriptures and the Fathers), he would not be married. Sir Frederick Madden discovered a very important entry in a hand of the fifteenth century on the fly leaf of a manuscript of *Piers Ploughman* in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, to the following effect—"Memorandum, quod Stacy de Rokayle, pater Willielmi de Langlond, qui

of "Malverne hilles." We have less difficulty in ascertaining its date. At ll. 1735—1782, we have, without doubt, an allusion to the treaty of Bretigny, in 1360, and to the events which preceded it: in the earlier part of this passage, there is an allusion to the sufferings of the English army in the previous winter campaign, to the retreat which followed, and the want of provisions which accompanied it, and to the tempest which they encountered near Chartres (the "dym cloude" of the poem). The "pestilences" mentioned at l. 2497, were the great plague which happened in 1348-9 (and which had

Stacius fuit generosus, et morabatur in Schiptone under Whicwode, tenens domini Le Spenser in comitatu Oxon., *qui prædictus Willielmus fecit librum qui vocatur Perys Ploughman.*" It would perhaps be not impossible to trace the name and history of this Stacy de Rokayle; but till that be done, I do not think this memorandum ought to be considered as overthrowing the old tradition relating to Robert Longlande. It may be mentioned as a remarkable specimen of the patriotism of David Buchanan, that he lays claim to the author of Piers Ploughman as a Scotchman:—"Robertus Langland, natione Scotus, professione sacerdos, vir ex obscuris ortus parentibus, pius admodum et ingeniosus et zelo divinæ gloriæ plenus; inter monachos Benedictinos educatus in civitate Aberdonensi, vir æque erat in omni humaniore literatura insigniter doctus, et in medicina admodum clarus, pium opus sermone vulgare scripsit cui imposuit, || Visionem Petri Aratoris, lib. 1. || Pro conjugio sacerdotum, lib. 1. || Claruit anno Christi Redemptoris, 1369. Regnante Davide Secundo in Scotia."—Dav. Buchanan, *de Scriptoribus Scotis*. MS. Bibl. Univ. Edin.

previously been alluded to in the opening of the poem, l. 168), and that of 1361-2,—the two first of the three great pestilences which devastated our island in the fourteenth century. The south-western wind, mentioned in l. 2500, occurred on the fifteenth day of January, 1362. It is probable that the poem of *Piers Ploughman* was composed in the latter part of this year, when the effects of the great wind were fresh in people's memory, and when the treaty of Bretigny had become a subject of popular discontent.⁴

The poem was given to the world under a name which could not fail to draw the attention of the people. Amid the oppressive injustice of the great and the vices of their idle retainers, the corruptions of the clergy, and the dishonesty which too frequently characterised the dealings of merchants and traders, the simple unsophisticated heart of the ploughman is held forth as the dwelling of virtue

⁴ We may mention another historical allusion in *Piers Ploughman*, which seems to involve a chronological difficulty; the dry April in the mayoralty of John Chichester (l. 8567). It appears clear that this is an allusion to a remarkable drought in the year 1351, which answers precisely to a calculation of the date given in the text, in which all the manuscripts that I have consulted agree. But the only year in which Chichester is said to have been mayor was 1368-9 according to some, or 1369-70 according to others. Stowe (as quoted in the note on this passage) has altered the text of *Piers Ploughman* to suit the year in which Chichester is known to have been mayor: yet there can be

and truth. It was the ploughman, and not the pope with his proud hierarchy, who represented on earth the Saviour who had descended into this world as the son of the carpenter, who had lived a life of humility, who had wandered on foot or ridden on an ass. "While God wandered on earth," says one of the political songs of the beginning of the fourteenth century,⁵ "what was the reason that he would not ride?" The answer expresses the whole force of the popular sentiment of the age: "because he would not have a retinue of greedy attendants by his side, in the shape of grooms and servants, to insult and oppress the peasantry."

At the period when this poem was first published, England, in common with the rest of Europe, had been struck with a succession of calamities. Little more than twelve years had passed since a terrible pestilence had swept away perhaps not less than one-half of the population.⁶ The lower classes, ill

little doubt (even from the allusion to the treaty of Bretigny) that the poem itself was composed before that date, and therefore the same or another Chichester had probably been mayor before.

⁵ Political Songs, p. 240.

⁶ This terrible calamity was said by the astrologers to have been brought about by an extraordinary conjunction of Saturn with the other planets, which happened scarcely once in a thousand years. An astrologer and physician, who witnessed its effects, Symon de Covino, has left a Latin poem on the subject under the title *De Judicio Solis in Conviviis Saturni*, in which he describes Saturn as indulging his

fed and neglected, perished by thousands, while the higher ranks—the proud and pampered nobility—escaped; “he who was ill nourished with unsubstantial food,” says a contemporary writer, “fell before the slightest breath of the destroyer; to the poor, death was welcome, for life is to them more cruel than death. But death respected princes, nobles, knights, judges, gentlemen; of these few die, because their life is one of enjoyment.”⁷ It was the general belief that this fearful visitation had been

malevolence towards the human race by obtaining a judgment against men for their sins. This opinion is alluded to in *Piers Ploughman*, l. 4453,

“And so seide Saturne,
And sente yow to warne.”

The influence of this planet was represented by astrologers as being peculiarly noxious, as is expressed in the following old distich:—

“Jupiter atque Venus boni, Saturnusque malignus,
Sol et Mercurius cum Luna sunt mediocres.”

⁷ “Qui male pastus erat fragili virtute ciborum,
Labitur exiguo percussus flamine cladis;
Indeque Saturni vulgus, pauperrima turba,
Grata morte cadunt, quia vivere talibus est mors.
Post quos lunares pereunt et mercuriales,
Et sic debilior succumbit in ordine primo;
Post alii tandem pestem secuntur eandem.
Sed dea principibus et nobilibus, generosis,
Militibus, seu judicibus fera Parca pepercit.
Raro cadunt tales, quia talibus est data vita
Dulcis in hoc mundo, quam gloria laudat inanis.”

Symon de Covino, in the *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole
des Chartes*, tom. ii. p. 236.

sent by God as a punishment for the sins which had more particularly characterised the higher orders of society; yet, instead of profiting by the warning, they became, during the years which followed, prouder, more cruel and oppressive, and more licentious, than before. Another pestilence came, which visited the classes that had before escaped, and at the same time a tempest such as had seldom been witnessed seemed to announce the vengeance of heaven. The streets and roads were filled with zealots who preached and prophesied of other misfortunes, to people who had scarcely recovered from the terror of those which were past. At this moment the satirist stepped forth, and laid open with unsparing knife the sins and corruptions which provoked them.

From what has been said, it will be seen that the Latin poems attributed to Walter Mapes, and the Collection of Political Songs, form an introduction to the Vision of Piers Ploughman. It seems clear that the writer was well acquainted with the former, and that he not unfrequently imitates them. The Poem on the Evil Times of Edward II. already alluded to (in the Political Songs) contains within a small compass all his chief points of accusation against the different orders of society. But a new mode of composition had been brought into fashion since the appearance of the famous "*Roman de la Rose*," and the author makes his attacks less directly, under an allegorical clothing. The condition of

society is revealed to the writer in a dream, as in the singular poem just mentioned, and as in the still older satire, the *Apocalypsis Goliæ*; but in *Piers Ploughman* the allegory follows no systematic plot, it is rather a succession of pictures in which the allegorical painting sometimes disappears altogether, than a whole like the *Roman de la Rose*, and it is on that account less tedious to the modern reader, while the vigorous descriptions, the picturesque ideas, and numerous other beauties of different kinds, cause us to lose sight of the general defects of this class of writings.

Piers Ploughman is, in fact, rather a succession of dreams, than one simple vision. The dreamer, weary of the world, falls asleep beside a stream amid the beautiful scenery of Malvern Hills. In his vision, the people of the world are represented to him by a vast multitude assembled in a fair meadow; on one side stands the tower of Truth, elevated on a mountain, the right aim of man's pilgrimage, while on the other side is the dungeon of Care, the dwelling place of Wrong. In the first sections (*passus*) of the poem are represented the origin of society, the foundation and dignity of kingly power, and the separation of society into different classes and orders. In the midst of his astonishment at what he sees, a fair lady, the personification of "holy church," approaches, to instruct the dreamer. She explains to him the meaning of the

different objects which had presented themselves to his view, and shows by exhortations and examples the merit of content and moderation, the danger of disobedience (exemplified in the story of Lucifer's fall), and the efficacy of love and charity. In the midst of his conversation with his instructor, a lady makes her appearance on the scene. This is lady Mede, the personification of that mistaken object at which so large a portion of mankind direct their aim—the origin of most of the corruptions and evil deeds in the world—not the just remuneration of our actions which we look forward to in a future life, but the reward which is sought by those who set all their hopes on the present. Holy Church now quits the dreamer, who is left to observe what is taking place amid the crowd in the field. (*Passus II.*) They all pay their court to lady Mede, who, by the intermediation of Cyvyle, or the law, is betrothed in marriage to Falsehood. The marriage is forbidden by Theology, and Cyvyle agrees to carry the cause to London for judgment, contrary to the desire of Simony. Falsehood and Flattery bribe the lawyers to aid the former in his suit, but their designs are baffled by Conscience, at whose suggestion the king takes the lady into his own custody, and drives away Falsehood and his greedy followers. Mede soon finds favour at court (*passus III.*), and especially with the friars, who are ready to absolve her of all her sins for a proper considera-

tion. The king proposes to marry her to Conscience; who however declines the match, and as a reason for his refusal gives a very unfavourable picture of the lady's previous life and private character. Mede defends herself, and accuses Conscience of thwarting and opposing the will and designs of kings and great people. The dispute becoming hot, the king interferes and orders Mede and Conscience to be reconciled and kiss each other. (*Passus IV.*) This Conscience refuses to do, unless by the advice of Reason; on whose arrival, Peace comes into the parliament to make his complaint against the cruel oppressions of Wrong. Wrong is condemned, but Mede and the lawyers attempt to get him off with the payment of a sum of money. The king, however, allows himself to be guided by Reason and Conscience, expresses his dissatisfaction that law is influenced by Mede, and his determination to govern his realm by the counsel of Reason.

477 In a second vision (*Passus V*), the dreamer is again carried to the "field full of folk," where Reason has taken upon himself the character of a preacher, and, fortified by the king's authority, induces the various classes of sinners to confess and repent. The personification of the different sins forms perhaps the most remarkable part of the whole poem. The multitude being thus converted from their evil courses, are persuaded by Repent-

ance and Hope to set out on a pilgrimage in search of Truth. In their ignorance of the path which they must follow in this search, they apply to a palmer who had wandered over a large portion of the world in search of different saints ; but they find him as little acquainted with the way as themselves. They are helped out of this dilemma by Piers the Ploughman, who, seeing them terrified by the difficulties of the road, offers to be their guide, if they will wait till he has sown his half acre. (*Passus VI*). In the mean time all the pilgrims who have strength and skill, are employed on some useful works, except the knight, who undertakes, in return for the support which he is to derive from the ploughman's labours, to watch and protect him against plunderers and foreign enemies. The peace of the labourers is first disturbed by Waster, who refuses to perform the conditions by which the others are bound : the aid of the knight being found inefficient against this turbulent gentleman, the Ploughman is obliged to send for Hunger, who effectually humbles him. This section of the poem is a continued allusion to the effects of the famine and pestilence, and a satire upon the luxurious and extravagant life of our forefathers in the fourteenth century. (*Passus VII*). Truth, hearing of the intentions of Piers the Ploughman to leave his labours in order to serve as a guide to the pilgrims in their journey, sends him a messenger, exhorting him to

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remain at home and continue his labours, and giving him a "pardon," which was to embrace all those who aided him honestly, by their works, and who should carry on their various avocations in purity of heart. The writer here takes occasion to sneer at the "pardons" of the pope, then so much in vogue; a priest questions the legitimacy of Piers' bull of pardon, and the altercation between them becomes so loud that the dreamer awakes. The pardon of Piers Ploughman is granted to those who do good works: the dreamer is lost in the speculation on the question as to what the good works are, and he becomes engaged in a new pilgrimage, in search of a person who has not appeared before,—Do-well.

51 (*Passus VIII*). All his inquiries after Do-well are fruitless: even the friars, to whom he addresses himself, give but a confused account; and, weary with wandering about, the dreamer is again overtaken by slumber. Thought now appears to him, and recommends him to Wit, who describes to him the residence of Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best, and enumerates their companions and attendants. (*Passus IX*). The Castle of Do-well is an allegorical representation of man (the individual), in which lady Anima (the soul) is placed for safety, and guarded by a keeper named Kynde (nature). With Do-well, the representative of those who live according to truth in honest wedlock, are contrasted the people who live in lust and wickedness, the de-

scendants of the murderer Cain, who was begotten by Adam in an evil hour. (*Passus X*). Wit has a wife named lady Study, who is angry that her spouse should lay open his high truths to those who are uninitiated—it is no better than “throwing pearls to swine, which would rather have hawes.” Wit is daunted by his wife’s long lecture, and leaves the dreamer to pursue his own suit. This he does with so much meekness and humility, that the wrath of dame Study is appeased, and she sends him to Clergy, with a sign of recommendation from herself. Clergy receives the pilgrim, and entertains him with a long declamation on the character of Do-well, Do-better, and Do-best, and on the corruptions of the church and the monkish orders, in the course of which is uttered the remarkable prophecy of the king who was to “confess and beat” the monks, and give them an “incurable knock,” which was after less than two centuries so exactly fulfilled in the dissolution of the monasteries. The wanderer confesses himself “little the wiser” for Clergy’s lecture, and by his pertness of reply merits a reproof from Scripture. (*Passus XI*). In another vision the dreamer is exposed to the seductions of Fortune, whose two fair damsels, Concupiscentia-carnis and Covetousness-of-the Eyes, persuade him to enjoy the present moment, and lead him entirely from his previous pursuit. He is only recalled from his error by the approach of Old Age, and then he

falls into the contemplation of a series of subjects, the covetousness of the friars who gave absolution from motives of personal interest, predestination, &c. Then Kynde, or Nature, came and carried him to a mountain, which represented the world, and there showed him how all other animals but man followed Reason; and Imaginative came after, and told him that all his present doubt and anxiety had been brought upon him for contending with Reason and suffering himself to be led astray by Fortune. (*Passus XII*). The whole of the next section of the poem is occupied with a long exhortation by Imaginative, concerning God's chastisements, the merits of Charity and Mercy, the greater responsibility before God of those who are learned and cannot sin ignorantly, the difficulty for the rich man to enter heaven.

(*Passus XIII*). In another vision, Conscience meets with the dreamer, and takes him to dine with Clergy. Patience comes to the feast in beggar's weeds, but is seated in the most honourable place at the table. A doctor of the church is of the party, and distinguishes himself by his gluttony; and by discussing theological questions after dinner. At length Conscience and Patience go on a pilgrimage. In their way they meet with a minstrel, named *Activa Vita*, or Haukyn the Active-man, with a coat covered with spots of dirt, whom they question on his mode of life. (*Passus XIV*). Haukyn

the Active-man, the representative of that class of people who neglect their souls for their worldly affairs, excuses the dirtiness of his apparel on the ground that he has none to change, and that he has too many occupations to allow him time to have it cleaned. Conscience and Patience teach him a method to clean his coat, inform him where charity is to be found, and recommend patient poverty to him, showing him the advantage of poverty over riches. Haukyn's repentance and lamentation for the neglect of his duties awake the dreamer.

(*Passus XV*). Amid his anxiety to know something more certain of Do-well, the dreamer has another vision, in which Soul appears to him, and enters into a long relation of the corruptions and negligence of the clergy. (*Passus XVI*). Soul finally sends him to Piers the Ploughman, who possesses the garden in which the tree of Charity grows, and which is rented under him by Free-will. Piers explains to him the nature of the tree, and of the props which support it; and shakes down some of the fruit for him. The allegory then changes, and we are introduced to the birth and passion of the Saviour, as arising out of the fruit of Charity. At this moment the dreamer awakes, and therewith loses sight of Piers the Ploughman: in his anxiety to find Piers, he meets with Faith, in the garb of Abraham, who was in search of God, now incarnate, and who waited for his passion in

order to be delivered from hell. (*Passus XVII*). Then comes Spes, or Hope, who also was in search of the knight that was to vanquish the evil one. As they go along the way towards Jerusalem to the "justes," discoursing on the obligations of the old and new law and the abrogation of the former, they meet with a man who had been left helpless by thieves, wounded and naked: Faith and Hope passed by without helping him, but the Samaritan, who was also riding to the "justes," descended from his horse, bound his wounds, and deposited him in an inn at the grange named *Lex Christi*. The Samaritan gives the dreamer a singular explanation of the mysteries of the Trinity; and, after having represented to him the heinousness of sins against the different persons, and the necessity of making reparation, he pursues his way to Jerusalem.

(*Passus XVIII*). The vision which forms the eighteenth section or *passus*, and in which the character of Piers the Ploughman is identified with that of the Saviour, is entirely occupied with an allegorical description of Christ's Passion, and his descent into Hell. (*Passus XIX*). In the next section the history of Christ's passion and victory, and his figurative representative Piers the Ploughman, is continued. Grace, through Piers the Ploughman, descends upon the people, and lays the foundation of the Church, which is cultivated by

Piers with his four oxen (the four Evangelists). Piers is attacked by Pride, who gathers a great host to assail the Church. Conscience advises the people who follow Piers (the Church), to take shelter in the strong hold of Unity, and make preparations for their defence. By the counsel of Kind-wit and Conscience they dig a great ditch around Unity. The measures of Surety are embarrassed by the unreasonable opposition of some members or parts of the community, who oppose Piers's doctrine of restitution—the brewer will not repent of the tricks which he puts on his customers, the vicar adheres to his simony, the lord will continue to oppress his tenants, and the king will not be restrained by his laws. (*Passus XX*). In the last section of the poem, the dreamer, after having been accosted by Need, who preaches on the virtues of temperance, has a vision of Antichrist, who comes to attack the Castle of Unity. It must be remembered that at this period many people supposed that Antichrist was already on the earth, and that he was the cause of all the evils with which mankind was then visited, so that this last notion brought the allegory home to people's feelings. The standard-bearer of Antichrist was Pride. Conscience called Kynde, or Nature, to his aid, who brought an army of diseases and pestilences. Death, one of his chief soldiers, made terrible havoc. At length Kind ceased his ravages ;

and a horde of enemies immediately arose against Conscience, such as Fortune, Lechery, Covetousness, Simony. Life, with his mistress Fortune, indulged in all kinds of excess, until he was visited by Age and Despair, who treated him very roughly. The dreamer, forsaken by Fortune, and participating in the misfortunes of Life, by the advice of Kynde takes shelter with Conscience in the Castle of Unity, which is threatened by an army of priests and monks. At length this strong hold is endangered by the entrance of Flattery, who is admitted in the disguise of a Physician. Conscience, unable to retain possession, embarks upon another pilgrimage in search of Piers the Ploughman, and the dreamer awakes. This is the conclusion of the poem. Whitaker thought that it should have had a more consoling end; but it must be remembered that the writer of *Piers Ploughman* designed to paint the world as it was, and to describe the numerous obstacles which lay in the way of the improvement and amelioration of mankind when he wrote.

While one member of the monastic order was thus contributing by his satirical pen towards producing a reform among his countrymen, another monk was beginning to preach in a still bolder manner against the popish system. This was John Wycliffe, under whom the despised lollards became an important sect. This attempt at religious reformation only formed a part of the great movement of the

fourteenth century, which soon afterwards broke out in the popular commotions of the reign of Richard II. The writer of *Piers Ploughman* was neither a sower of sedition, nor what would be characterized by his contemporaries as a heretic. The doctrines inculcated throughout the book are so far from democratic, that he constantly preaches the Christian doctrine of obedience to rulers. Yet its tendency to debase the great, and to raise the commons in public consideration, must have rendered it popular among the latter ; and, although no single important doctrine of the popish religion is attacked, yet the unsparing manner in which the vices and corruptions of the church are laid open, must have helped in no small degree the cause of the Reformation. Of the ancient popularity of *Piers Ploughman* we have a proof in the great number of copies which still exist, most of them written in the latter part of the fourteenth century ; and the circumstance that the manuscripts are seldom executed in a superior style of writing, and scarcely ever ornamented with painted initial letters, may perhaps be taken as a proof that they were not written for the higher classes of society. From the time when it was published, the name of *Piers Ploughman* became a favourite among the popular reformers.⁸ The ear-

⁸ We have a very remarkable proof of the popularity of *Piers Ploughman* with the lower orders (among whom pro-

liest instance of the adoption of that name for another satirical work is found in the Creed of Piers Ploughman, printed also in the present volume, and in which even the form of verse of the Vision is imitated.

In this latter poem, which was undoubtedly written by a Wycliffite, Piers Ploughman is no longer an allegorical personage—he is the simple representative of the peasant rising up to judge and act for himself—the English *sans-culotte* of the fourteenth century, if we may be allowed the comparison. When it was written, a period of great excitement had passed since the age of Langlande, the reputed author of the Vision—a period characterized by the turbulence of the peasantry—which had witnessed in France the fearful insurrection of

bably parts of it were repeated by memory), and of its influence on the insurrections of the peasantry in the reign of Richard II., in the seditious letter of John Ball to the Commons of Essex, preserved by Tho. Walsingham, Hist. Angl. p. 275. I am not sure if “*John Schep*” may not contain an allusion to the opening of the poem; but the second passage, here printed in Italics, refers evidently to Passus VI and VII, and the third is an allusion to the characters of Do-well and Do-bet.

“*John Schep* sometime Seint Mary priest of Yorke, and now of Colchester, graeteth well John Namelesse, and John the Miller, and John Carter, and biddeth them that they beware of guyle in borough, and stand together in Gods name, and biddeth *Piers Plowman goe to his werke*, and chastise well Hob the robber, and take with you John Trew-

the *Jacquerie*, and in England the rebellion of Wat Tyler and Jack Straw.⁹

In Piers Ploughman's Creed it is the church simply, and not the state, which is the object of attack. The clergy—and more particularly the monks—are accused of having falsified religion, and of being actuated solely by worldly passions—pride, covetousness, self-love. The writer, placing himself in the position of one who has just learnt the first grounds of religious knowledge, is anxious to find a person capable of instructing him in his creed, and with this object he addresses himself to the different orders of friars. He applies first to the Minorites, who abuse the Carmelites, and pride themselves in their own holiness. Disgusted with their jealousies and self-sufficiency, the inquirer

man, and all his fellows, and no moe. John the Miller hath y-ground smal, small, small. The kings sonne of heaven shal pay for all. Beware or ye be woe, know your frende fro your foe, Have ynough, and say hoe: And *do wel and better*, and flee sinne, and seeke peace and holde you therin, and so biddeth John Trewman and all his fellowes."

⁹ The mention of Wycliffe and of Walter Brute and other circumstances, fix the date of Piers Ploughman's Creed with tolerable certainty in the latter years of the reign of Richard II. It was probably written very soon after the year 1393, the date of the persecution of Walter Brute at Hereford; and from the particular allusion to that person we may perhaps suppose that like the Vision it was written on the Border of Wales.

seeks the Preachers, or Dominicans; amid their stately buildings, and under their sleek and well filled skins, he finds the same want of Christian charity: their pride drives him to the order of St. Austin. The Austin Friars, as well as the Carmelites, will only instruct him for money, and, shocked at their covetousness, he continues his wanderings, until at last he meets with a poor Ploughman, in whom he finds the charity and knowledge after which he has been seeking. The Ploughman enters into a bitter attack on the vices of all the four orders of friars: he describes their spirit of persecution, exemplified in the case of Wycliffe and others, and their simony; speaks of Wycliffe and Walter Brut as preachers of the truth; and finishes by teaching the inquirer his simple creed.

The Creed of Piers Ploughman was written by one who approved the opinions of Wycliffe, and it seems to have been carefully proscribed. There does not appear to exist any manuscript older than the first printed edition.

The great popularity of the Vision of Piers Ploughman in the fourteenth century, and its political influence, are proved by another close imitation, which was composed immediately after the capture, and previous to the deposition, of King Richard II. This poem also appears to have been proscribed, and we have only a fragment left, which was printed

from an unique manuscript for the Camden Society. It also is composed in alliterative verse, and its meaning is rendered obscure by a confused allegorical style. It was evidently written towards the Welsh Border, perhaps at Bristol, which is mentioned in the opening lines; and it appears to have been intended as a continuation of, or as a sequel to, *Piers Ploughman*, which it immediately follows in the only manuscript in which it is preserved.

Another early poem, of which the *Ploughman* is the hero, was inserted among the works of Chaucer under the title of the *Ploughman's Tale*. This, like the *Creed*, is free from allegory; and it differs from the others also in being written in rhyme, and not in alliterative verse. The *Ploughman's Tale* was probably written in the earlier half of the fifteenth century.¹⁰ It is a coarse attack on the dif-

¹⁰ Different circumstances connected with this poem (which also appears to have been proscribed, for we have no early manuscript of it) lead me to suppose that it was written in the reign of Henry IV. when the *burning* of heretics came into fashion, which is alluded to in the following stanza:—

“ Were Christ on earth here, eftsoone
These would damne him to die:
All his hestes they han for-done,
And saine his sawes ben heresie:
And ayenst his commaundements they crie,
And damne all his to be brend;
For it liketh not hem such losengerie,
God almighty hem amend!”

ferent orders of the clergy, for their pride, covetousness, and other vices. Its versification has little merit; and there appears to be no good reason for inserting it among the Canterbury Tales.

The Vision of Piers Ploughman appears to have continued to enjoy a wide popularity up to the middle of the fifteenth century. We hear nothing of it from that period to the middle of the sixteenth, when it was printed by the reformers, and received with so much favour, that no less than three editions, or rather three impressions, are said to have been sold in the course of one year. Another edition was printed at the beginning of the reign of Queen Elizabeth: and it appears to have been much read in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and

In another passage, the writer of this poem alludes to the Creed of Piers Ploughman as though he were the author of it, and as a piece then known to everybody.

“ And all such other counterfaitours,
Chanons, canons, and such disguised,
Been Gods enemies and traitours,
His true religion han foule despised.
Of *freres* I have told before
In a *making of a Crede*;
And yet I could tell worse and more,
But men would werien it to rede.”

Perhaps, however, the writer only claims the authorship of the Creed in his allegorical character, as the representative of the class of satirical writers who were then attacking the monastic orders.

even at the beginning of the seventeenth. The name of Piers Ploughman is not uncommon in the political tracts of that period.¹¹

The Poem of Piers Ploughman is peculiarly a national work. It is the most remarkable monument of the public spirit of our forefathers in the middle, or, as they are often termed, dark ages. It is a pure specimen of the English language at a period when it had sustained few of the corruptions which have disfigured it since we have had writers of "Grammars;" and in it we may study with advantage many of the difficulties of the language which these writers have misunderstood. It is, moreover, the finest example left of the kind of versification which was purely English, inasmuch as it

¹¹ We may enumerate the following as specimens of such works published in the sixteenth century. Several similar publications appeared in the century following.

"Pyers Plowmans Exortation vnto the lordes, knights, and burgoysses of the parlyament house." 8vo. printed by Anthony Scholoker, in the reign of Edward VI.

"Newes from the North, Otherwise called the Conference between Simon Certain, and Pierce Plowman, faithfully collected and gathered by T. F. Student." 4to. London, John Alde, 1579.

"The Plowmans complaint of sundry wicked livers, and especially of the bad bringinge vp of children: written in verse by R. B. printed for Hugh Corne, 1580." 8vo.

"A goodlye Dialogue and dysputacion betwene Pyers Plowman and a Popish Preest, cōcernynge the Supper of the Lorde." 8vo, without date.

had been the only one in use among our Anglo-Saxon progenitors, in common with the other people of the North. To many readers it will be perhaps necessary to explain that rhyming verse was not in use among the Anglo-Saxons. In place of rhyme, they had a system of verse of which the characteristic was a very regular *alliteration*, so arranged that, in every couplet, there should be two principal words in the first line beginning with the same letter, which letter must also be the initial of the first word on which the stress of the voice falls in the second line. There has, as yet, been discovered no system of foot-measure in Anglo-Saxon verse, but the common metre consists apparently in having two rises and two falls of the voice in each line. These characteristics are accurately preserved in the verse of *Piers Ploughman*; and the measure appears to be the same, if we make allowance for the change of the slow and impressive pronunciation of the Anglo-Saxon for the quicker pronunciation of Middle English, which therefore required a greater number of syllables to fill up the same space of time.

We can trace the history of alliterative verse in England with tolerable certainty. The Anglo-Normans first brought in rhymes, which they employed in their own poetry. The adoption of the new system into the English language was gradual, but it appears to have commenced in the first half

of the twelfth century. It was, at first, mixed with alliterative couplets : that is, in the same poem were used sometimes rhyming couplets, which were suddenly changed for alliterative couplets, and then, after a while, rhyme was again brought in, and so on. Of this kind of poetry we have four very remarkable examples, the Proverbs of King Alfred, a poem which was certainly in existence in the first half of the twelfth century;¹² the Early English Bestiary;¹³ the Poem on the Debate between the Body and the Soul;¹⁴ and the grand work of Layamon.¹⁵ The following lines from the Bestiary may serve as a specimen of the manner in which the two systems are intermixed; they form part of the account of the spider:—

“ðanne renneð ge rapelike,
for ge is ai redi,
nimeð anon to ðe net,
and nimeð hem ðere,

¹² Printed in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i. pp. 170-188. On the date of this poem, see the *Biographia Britannica Literaria* (of the Royal Society of Literature), Anglo-Saxon period, pp. 395, 396.

¹³ Printed in the *Altdeutsche Blätter* von Moriz Haupt und Heinrich Hoffmann, vol. ii. pp. 99-120, and in the *Reliquiæ Antiquæ*, vol. i. pp. 203-227.

¹⁴ Discovered in a MS. at Worcester by Sir Thomas Philipps, who published a small edition of it, in folio.

¹⁵ Edited by Sir Frederick Madden, for the Society of Antiquaries.

bitterlike ge hem bit
 and here bane wurðeð,
 drepeð and drinkeð hire blod,
 doð ge hire non oðer god,
 bute fret hire *fille*,
 and dareð siðen *stille*."

* * *

" Cethegrande is a *fis*
 ðe moste ðat in water *is*;
 ðat tu wuldes seien *get*,
 gef ðu it soge wan it *flet*," etc.

This kind of poetry appears to have been common until the middle of the thirteenth century; after which period we only find alliteration in songs, not used in simple alliterative couplets, but mixed up in the same lines with rhyme in an irregular and playful manner.¹⁶ But there appears little room for doubting that during the whole of this time the pure alliterative poetry was in use among the lower classes of society; and its revival towards the middle of the fourteenth century appears to have been a part of the political movement which then took place. In this point of view, the poem of *Piers Ploughman* becomes still more worthy of attention as a document of contemporary literary history. The old alliterative verse came so much into fashion at this period that it was adopted for the composi-

¹⁶ Many instances of this will be found in the *Specimens of Lyric Poetry*, composed in England in the reign of Edward the First (Percy Society Publication).

tion of long romances, of which several still remain.¹⁷ The use of this kind of verse was continued in the fifteenth century, and was imitated in Scotland as late as the time of Dunbar, but the later writers were evidently unacquainted with the strict rules of this species of composition.

The Anglo-Saxons, who used this kind of verse only, wrote their poetry invariably as prose. But the scribe was in the habit of indicating the division of the lines by a dot. Among modern scholars a question has arisen as to the propriety of printing the alliterative couplet in two short lines, or in one long one. It appears to me that the mode in which the dot is used in the manuscripts decides the question in favour of the short lines. The mode in which the alliterative couplet is intermixed with the rhyming couplet in the poems of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (which also are written in the manuscripts in the same form as prose), seems to me a strong confirmation of this opinion; at least, in these last mentioned cases, the verse must have been considered as written in short lines. As the scribes quitted the custom of writing poetry in their manuscripts as prose, with the divisions of lines indicated by dots, to adopt that of arranging them

The same
I suppose
Short is in
Timothy

Dot = 7

¹⁷ Such as William and the Werwolf, edited by Sir Frederick Madden; the romance of Jerusalem; that of Alexander: &c.

in lines as we do at present, these short lines were found very inconvenient, because they were obliged either to waste a great deal of parchment, or to write in several narrow columns. To remedy this, they fell perhaps gradually into the custom of writing the two parts of the alliterative couplet in one line, always, however, marking the division by a dot. They followed the same method with the shorter rhyming lines, as is the case with the old English Metrical Romance of Horn in a manuscript in the Harleian Collection.¹⁸ All the alliterative poetry of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is found written in these long lines, with the dot of division in the middle. In the fifteenth century the meaning of this dot appears to have been forgotten, and the system of alliteration so far misunderstood, that the writers thought it only necessary to have *at least* three alliterative words in a long line, without any consideration of their position in the line. I say *at least*, because they not unfrequently inserted four or five allite-

¹⁸ MS. Harl. 2253. In this manuscript, and in several others which I have seen, the rhyming poems in short lines, whether in English, Latin, or French, are arranged in this manner; and I have met with instances in which part of a poem has been arranged in this way, and other parts of the same poem arranged in short lines, to suit the scribes convenience. I have a strong impression of having met with an early English manuscript in which a fragment of alliterative verse was written in short couplets.

native words in the same line, which would certainly have been considered a defect in the earlier writers. It is my opinion, that a modern editor is wrong in printing the verses of Piers Ploughman in long lines, as they stand in the manuscripts, unless he profess to give them as a fac-simile of the manuscripts themselves, or he plead the same excuse of convenience from the shape of his book. In either case, he must carefully preserve the dots of separation in the middle of the lines, which are more inconvenient than the length of the lines, because they interfere with the punctuation of the modern editor. If, as appears to be the case, these dots are merely marks to indicate the division of the couplet, their purpose is much better served by printing the lines in couplets. The construction of the earlier Anglo-Saxon verse, the analogy of the mixed rhyming and alliterative verses of the semi-Saxon poems, and the use of these dots in the middle of the lines in the manuscripts of Piers Ploughman, appears to me convincing proofs that it ought to be printed so. I think moreover that the alliterative verse reads much more harmoniously in the short couplets, than in the long lines.

The manuscripts of the Vision of Piers Ploughman are extremely numerous both in public and in private collections: There are at least eight in the British Museum: there are ten or twelve in the Cambridge Libraries; and they are not less nume-

One m
have on
impress
Cynwulf
rejoice
in his

Mani
à la 152

rous at Oxford. As might be expected in a popular work like this, the manuscripts are in general full of variations; but there are two classes of manuscripts which give two texts that are widely different from each other, those variations commencing even with the first lines of the poem. One of these texts, which was adopted in the early printed editions, is given in the present volumes; the other text was selected for publication by Dr. Whitaker. The following extract, comprising the first lines of the poem,¹⁹ will show how each text begins, and will enable those who possess manuscripts of *Piers Ploughman* to ascertain at once to which text they belong:—

Text I.

In a somer seson
 Whan softe was the sonne,
 I shop me into shroudes
 As I a sheep weere,
 In habite as an heremite
 Unholy of werkes,
 Wenten wide in this world
 Wonders to here,
 Ac on a May morwenyng
 On Malverne hilles
 Me bifel a ferly,
 Of fairye me thoghte.
 I was wery for-wandred,

Text II.

In a somè seyson,
 Whan softe was the sonne,
 Y shop into shrobbis
 As y shepherde were.
 In abit az an ermite
 Unholy of werkes,
 That wente forthe in the worle
 Wondres to hure,
 And sawe meny cellis
 And selcouthe thynges.
 Ac on a May morwenyng
 On Malverne hulles
 Me by-fel for to slepe,

¹⁹ *Text I.* is from the edition now offered to the public:
Text II. from that edited by Dr. Whitaker.

And wente me to reste
 Under a broode bank
 By a bournes syde,
 And as I lay and lenede,
 And loked on the watres,
 I slombred into a slepyng,
 It sweyed so murye.
 Thanne gan I meten
 A merveillous swevene,
 That I was in a wildernesse
 Wiste I nevere where ;
 And as I biheld in to the eest
 An heigh to the sonne,
 I seigh a tour on a toft, etc.

For weyrynesse of wandryng,
 And in a lande as ich lay
 Lenede ich and slepte,
 And merveylously me mette,
 As ich may yow telle.
 Al the welthe of this wordle,
 And the woo bothe,
 Wynkyng as it were
 Wyterly ich saw hyt,
 Of truyth and of tricherye,
 Of tresoun and of gyle,
 Al ich saw slepyng,
 As ich shal yow telle.
 Esteward ich behulde
 After the sonne,
 And sawe a tour as ich
 trowede, etc.

Besides such variations as appear in the foregoing specimen, there are in the second text many considerable additions, omissions, and transpositions. It would not be easy to account for the existence of two texts differing so much ; but it is my impression that the first was the one published by the author, and that the variations were made by some other person, who was perhaps induced by his own political sentiments to modify passages, and was gradually led on to publish a revision of the whole. It is certain that in some parts of text II. the strong sentiments or expressions of the first text are softened down. We may give as an example of this, the statement of the popular opinion of the origin and purpose of kingly government :—

Text I.

Thanne kam ther a kyng,
 Knyghthod hym ladde,
 Might of the communes
 Made hym to regne.
 And thanne cam kynde wit,
 And clerkes he made,
 For to counseillen the kyng,
 And the commune save.
 The kyng and knyghthod,
 And clergie bothe,
 Casten that the commune
 Sholde hem self fynde.
 The commune contrevd
 Of kynde wit craftes,
 And for profit of al the peple
 Plowmen ordeyned,
 To tilie and to travaille,
 As trewe lif asketh.
 The kyng and the commune,
 And kynde wit the thridde,
 Shopen lawe and leauté.
 Ech man to knowe his owene.

Text II.

Thanne cam ther a kyng,
 Knyghtod hym ladde,
 The meche myghte of the men
 Made hym to regne.
 And thanne cam a kynde
 witte,
 And clerkus he made,
 And concience and kynde wit,
 And knyghthod to-gederes,
 Caste that the comune
 Sholde hure comunes fynde.
 Kynde wit and the comune
 Contrevede alle craftes,
 And for most profitable to the
 puple,
 A plouh thei gonne make,
 Wit leil labour to lyve,
 Wyl lyve and londe lasteth.

Nobody, I think, can deny that in this instance the doctrine is stated far more distinctly and far more boldly in the first text than in the second. In general the first text is the best whether we look at the mode in which the sentiments are stated, or at the poetry and language.

As far as I have been enabled to examine the remaining manuscripts of *Piers Ploughman*, at London and in the Universities, I think that nearly two thirds of those which remain are of the *four-*

teenth century; and the greater number, particularly of those written in the fourteenth century, present what I have distinguished as the first text, that given in the present volumes. I am by no means inclined to coincide in the reasons which led Dr. Whitaker to prefer the second text: if I were disposed to admit, as barely possible, (the supposition is quite a gratuitous one) "that the first edition of this work appeared when its author was a young man, and that he lived and continued in the habit of transcribing to extreme old age," (Pref.) I cannot agree with an editor in adopting a copy which he believes to be "a faithful representation of the work as it came first from the author," and which not only abounds in words and idioms which he afterwards altered, but which contains also "many original passages which the greater maturity of the author's judgment induced him to expunge."

I know only of two manuscripts of the Creed of Piers Ploughman, one in the British Museum (MS. Reg. 18. B. XVII.), the other in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, both on paper, and written long after the date of the printed editions, from which they appear to have been copied.

The first printed edition was that of Robert Crowley, in 1550; and it was so favourably received, that there is reason for believing that no less than three editions (or rather three impres-

sions²⁰) were sold in the course of the year. It is clear that Crowley had obtained an excellent manuscript; the printer has changed the orthography at will, and has evidently altered a word at times, but on the whole this printed text differs very little from the one we now publish.

Three years after the appearance of the Vision, another printer, Reynold Wolfe, published the first edition of the Creed, in the same form as Crowley's edition of the Vision.²¹

After the stormy reign of Mary was past, in the beginning of that of Elizabeth, the call for a new edition, and perhaps the destruction of many copies of the old one, led the well known printer Owen Rogers to reprint the Vision and the Creed toge-

²⁰ The title of the second impression is, "The Vision of Pierce Ploughman, nowe the seconde time imprinted by Roberte Crowley, dwellynge in Elye rentes in Holburne. Whereunto are added certayne notes and cotations in the mergyne, gevyng light to the Reader, &c. Imprinted at London by Roberte Crowley, dwellyng in Elye rentes in Holburne. The yere of our Lord M.D.L. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum." 4to. 125 leaves.

²¹ The title consists merely of the words "Pierce the Ploughman's Crede," upon a tablet in the midst of a wood-cut which had evidently been brought from the continent. A fac-simile of the most important part of the cut is given in Mr. Payne Collier's Bibliographical Catalogue of the Library of Lord Francis Egerton, p. 235. The colophon, on a separate leaf, is "Imprinted at London By Reynold Wolfe. Anno Domini M.D.L.III." It consists of 16 leaves in 4to.

ther.²² The impression was probably large, for it is still by no means a rare book. It was evidently much read during the reign of Elizabeth, and is not unfrequently alluded to by the writers of that age.

No other edition of this popular poem appeared, until it was published by Dr. Whitaker, in 1813,²³ from a manuscript then in the possession of Mr. Heber,²⁴ which contained the second text, written in a rather broad provincial dialect. This edition

²² The title of this edition is, "The Vision of Pierce Plowman, newlye imprinted after the authours olde copy, with a brefe summary of the principall matters set before every part called Passus. Wherevnto is also annexed the Crede of Pierce Plowman, neuer imprinted with the booke before. ¶ Imprinted at London, by Owen Rogers, dwelling neare vnto great Saint Bartelmewes gate, at the sygne of the spred Egle. ¶ The yere of our Lord God, a thousand, fyve hundred, thre score and one. The .xxi. daye of the Moneth of Februarye. Cum privilegio ad imprimendum solum." 4to. This edition is not foliated, or paged; and it is remarkable that it is as frequently found without the Creed, as with it. This edition of the Creed is also sometimes found separate.

²³ Whitaker's edition bears the following title,—"*Visio Willielmi de Petro Plouhman, Item Visiones ejusdem de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest. Or, The Vision of William concerning Piers Plouhman, and The Visions of the same concerning the Origin, Progress, and Perfection of Christian Life, &c. By Thomas Dunham Whitaker, LL.D., &c.*" 4to. London. Murray, 1813.

²⁴ This manuscript was bought at Heber's sale for the British Museum, where it is classed as additional MS. No. 10,574.

was printed in black-letter, in a very large and expensive form. In 1814, a reprint of the old edition of the Creed was published in the same form, as a companion to the Vision. It is not generally known that Dr. Whitaker projected an edition of the same text and paraphrase which are given in his 4to. edition, in 8vo. with Roman type instead of Black letter. After a few sheets had been composed, the design was abandoned, as it is said, in favour of the larger form. A copy of the proof sheets, formerly belonging to Mr. Haslewood, is now in the possession of Sir Frederick Madden. I am told that a rival edition was also begun, but not persevered in.

An attempt at a modernization, or rather a translation, of *Piers Ploughman*, was made in the earlier years of the present century, but only a few specimens appear to have been executed. The following lines, which possess some merit (though not very literal or correct), are the modern version the author proposed to give of ll. 2847—2870 of the poem. They were communicated to me by Sir Henry Ellis.

“ Next AVARICE came ; but how he look'd, to say,
Words do I want that rightly shall portray :
Like leathern purse his shrivell'd cheeks did shew,
Thick lipp'd, with two blear eyes and beetle brow :
In a torn threadbare tabard was he clad,
Which twelve whole winters now in wear he had ;
French scarlet 'twas, its colour well it kept,
So smooth that louse upon its surface crept.”

It will be necessary, in conclusion, to say a few

words on the edition now offered to the public. Without taking into consideration the inaccuracies and imperfections of Whitaker's edition, its inconvenient size and high price made it altogether inaccessible to the general reader ; and there appeared to be a general wish for one in a more convenient and less expensive form. At the same time it was desirable that a good text of a work so important for the history of our language and literature should be selected. Dr. Whitaker was not well qualified for this undertaking ; he also laboured under many disadvantages ; he had access to only three manuscripts, and those not very good ones ; and he has not chosen the best text even of those. Unless he had some reason to believe that the book was originally written in a particular dialect, he ought to have given a preference to that among the oldest manuscripts which presents the purest language ; but we cannot allow that manuscript to be chosen on a ground so capricious as "that the orthography and dialect in which it is written approach very near to that semi-Saxon jargon, in the midst of which the editor was brought up, and which he continues to hear daily spoken on the confines of Lancashire, and the West Riding of the county of York." (Pref.) This could not have been the language employed by a monk of Malvern.

The present editor has endeavoured, in the leisure moments which he has been able to snatch from

other employments, to supply the deficiency as well, and in as unassuming manner, as he could. He has chosen for his text a manuscript belonging to the valuable library of Trinity College, Cambridge (where its shelf-mark is B. 15, 17), because it appears to him to be the best and oldest manuscript now in existence. It is a fine folio manuscript, on vellum, written in a large hand, undoubtedly contemporary with the author of the poem, and in remarkably pure English, with ornamented initial letters. His object has been to give the poem as popular a form as is consistent with philological correctness. He has added a few notes which occurred to him in the course of editing the text, and which he hopes may render the meaning and allusions sometimes more clear to the general reader, for whom more especially they are intended. They might have been enlarged and rendered more complete, if he had been master of sufficient leisure to enable him to undertake extensive researches. But there are allusions, as well as words, in both poems to which it would be difficult to give any certain explanation. It has been thought advisable to give in the notes the more important variations of the second text, from Dr. Whitaker's edition; and a few readings are added from a second manuscript in Trinity College Library (R. 3, 14). The editor has hoped to add to the utility of the book by a copious glossary. He has been unwillingly obliged

to leave a few words without explanation ; all our early alliterative poetry abounds in difficult words. In this point he has to acknowledge the kind assistance of Sir Frederick Madden, whom no person equals in profound knowledge of English glossography, and than whom no one is more generous to advise and assist those who are in need of his aid. To Sir Henry Ellis, who kindly lent him his own manuscript notes on *Piers Ploughman*, the editor also owes his grateful acknowledgments ; and he regrets that at the time he received them the notes were already so far printed as to hinder him from making as much use of them as he could have wished.

The Editor cannot close these introductory observations without acknowledging the liberality with which the Master and Fellows of Trinity College placed the two manuscripts in their library at his disposal : he has taken the liberty of dedicating to them this attempt to give popularity to an important monument of the history of our Church, as the possessors of the valuable manuscript from which the text has been printed, and in grateful remembrance of the many benefits and kindnesses which he has personally derived from his college.

London, June 1, 1842.



THE VISION OF PIERS
PLOUGHMAN.



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OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND



THE VISION OF
PIERS PLOUGHMAN.

IN a somer seson
Whan softe was the sonne,
I shoop me into shroudes
As I a sheep weere,
In habite as an heremite
Unholy of werkes,
Wente wide in this world
Wondres to here ;
Ac on a May morwenynge
On Malverne hilles 10
Me bifel a ferly,
Of fairye me thoghte.
I was wery for-wandred,
And wente me to reste
Under a brood bank
By a bournes syde ;
And as I lay and lenede,
And loked on the watres,
I slombred into a slepyng,
It sweyed so murye. 20

Thanne gan I meten 21
 A merveillous swevene,
 That I was in a wildernesse,
 Wiste I nevere where,
 And as I biheeld into the eest
 An heigh to the sonne,
 I seigh a tour on a toft
 Trieliche y-maked,
 A deep dale bynethe,
 A dongeon therinne,
 With depe diches and derke
 And dredfulle of sighte. 32
 A fair feeld ful of folk
 Fond I ther bitwene,
 Of alle manere of men,
 The meene and the riche,
 Werchyngē and wandrynge,
 As the world asketh.

Some putten hem to the plough,
 Pleiden ful selde,
 In settyngē and sowyngē
 Swonken ful harde,
 And wonnen that wastours 43
 With glotonye destruyeth.

And somme putten hem to pride,
 Apparaild hem therafter,
 In contenaunce of clothyngē
 Comen degised.

In preieres and penaunces
 Putten hem manye,
 Al for the love of oure Lord
 Lyveden ful streyte,
 In hope to have after
 Hevene riche blisse; 54

As ances and heremites 55
 That holden hem in hire selles,
 And coveiten noght in contree
 To carien aboute,
 For no likerous liflode
 Hire likame to plese.

And somme chosen chaffare ;
 Thei cheveden the bettre,
 As it semeth to our sight
 That swiche men thryveth.

And somme murthes to make,
 As mynstralles konne, 66
 And geten gold with hire glee,
 Giltles, I leeve.

Ac japeres and jangeleres,
 Judas children,
 Feynen hem fantasies,
 And fooles hem maketh,
 And han hire wit at wille
 To werken if thei wolde.
 That Poul precheth of hem
 I wol nat preve it here ;
 But *Qui loquitur turpiloquium* 77
 Is Luciferes hyne.

Bidderes and beggeres
 Faste aboute yede,
 With hire belies and hire bagges
 Of breed ful y-crammed ;
 Faiteden for hire foode,
 Foughten at the ale.
 In glotonye, God woot,
 Go thei to bedde,
 And risen with ribaudie,
 Tho Roberdes knaves ; 88

Sleep and sory sleuthe 89
Seweth hem evere.

Pilgrymes and palmeres
Plighthen hem togidere,
For to seken seint Jame,
And seintes at Rome.
They wenten forth in hire wey,
With many wise tales,
And hadden leve to lyen
Al hire lif after.

I seigh somme that seiden
Thei hadde y-sought seintes ; 100
To ech a tale that thei tolde
Hire tonge was tempred to lye,
Moore than to seye sooth,
It semed bi hire speche.

Heremytes on an heep
With hoked staves
Wenten to Walsyngham,
And hire wenches after,
Grete lobies and longe
That lothe were to swynke ;
Clothed hem in copes, 111
To ben knowen from othere ;
And shopen hem heremytes,
Hire ese to have.

I fond there freres,
Alle the foure ordres,
Prechyng the peple
For profit of hemselfe ;
Glosed the gospel,
As hem good liked ;
For coveitise of copes,
Construwed it as thei wolde. 122

Manye of thise maistre freres 123
 Now clothen hem at likyng,
 For hire moneie and hire marchaun-
 Marchen togideres. [dize]
 For sith charité hath ben chapman,
 And chief to shryve lordes,
 Manye ferlies han fallen
 In a fewe yeres ;
 But holy chirche and hii *the . . .*
 Holde bettre togidres,
 The mooste meschief on molde
 Is mountynge wel faste. 134

Ther preched a pardoner,
 As he a preest were ;
 Broughte forth a bulle
 With many bisshopes seles,
 And seide that hymself myghte
 Assoillen hem alle,
 Of falshede, of fastynge,
 Of avowes y-broken.

Lewed men leved it wel,
 And liked hise wordes ;
 Comen up knelynge 145
 To kissen hise bulles.
 He bouched hem with his brevet,
 And blered hire eighen,
 And raughte with his rageman
 Rynge and broches.

Thus thei gyven hire gold
 Glotons to kepe,
 And leveth in swiche losels
 As leccherie haunten.

Were the bisshope y-blessed,
 And worth bothe hise eris, 156

His seel sholde noght be sent 157
To deceyve the peple.

Ac it is noght by the bisshope
That the boy precheth ;

For the parisshe preest and the par-
Parten the silver, [doner
That the poraille of the parisshe
Sholde have, if thei ne were.

Parsons and parisshe preestes
Pleynd hem to the bisshope,
That hire parissches weren povere
Sith the pestilence tyme, 168
To have a licence and leve
At London to dwelle,
And syngen ther for symonie ;
For silver is swete.

Bisshopes and bachelers,
Bothe maistres and doctours,
That han cure under Crist,
And crownynge in tokene
And signe that thei sholden
Shryven hire parissches,
Prechen and praye for hem, 179
And the povere fede,
Liggen at Londone
In Lenten and ellis.

Somme serven the kyng,
And his silver tellen
In cheker and in chauncelrie,
Chalangen hise dettes
Of wardes and of wardemotes,
Weyves and streyves.

And somme serven as servauntz
Lordes and ladies, 190

And in stede of stywardes 191
 Sitten and demen ;
 Hire messe and hire matyns
 And many of hire houres
 Arn doon un-devoutliche ;
 Drede is at the laste,
 Lest Crist in consistorie
 A-corse ful manye.

I perceyved of the power
 That Peter hadde to kepe,
 To bynden and unbynden,
 As the book telleth ; 202
 How he it lefte with love,
 As oure Lord highte,
 Amonges foure vertues,
 The beste of alle vertues,
 That cardinals ben called,
 And closynge yates.
 There is Crist in his kingdom
 To close and to shette,
 And to opene it to hem,
 And hevene blisse shewe.

Ac of the cardinals at court 213
 That kaughte of that name,
 And power presumed in hem
 A pope to make,
 To han that power that Peter hadde,
 Impugnen I nelle ;
 For in love and in lettrure
 The election bilongeth,
 For-thi I kan and kan naught
 Of court speke moore.

Thanne kam ther a kyng,
 Knyghthod hym ladde, 224

Might of the communes 225
Made hym to regne.

And thanne cam kynde wit,
And clerkes he made,
For to counseillen the kyng,
And the commune save.

The kyng and knyghthod,
And clergie bothe,
Casten that the commune
Sholde hemself fynde.

The commune contrevēd
Of kynde wit craftes, 236
And for profit of al the peple
Plowmen ordeyned,
To tilie and to travaille,
As trewe lif asketh.

The kyng and the commune,
And kynde wit the thridde,
Shopen lawe and leauté,
Ech man to knowe his owene.

Thanne lokēd up a lunatik,
A leene thyng with-alle,
And, knelynge to the kyng, 247
Clergially he seide :

“ Crist kepe thee, sire kyng !
And thi kyng-ryche,
And lene thee lede thi lond,
So leauté thee lovyē,
And for thi rightful rulyng
Be rewarded in hevene.”

And sithen in the eyr an heigh
An aungel of hevene
Lowēd to speke in Latyn,
For lewēd men ne koude 253

Jangle ne jugge, 259

That justifie hem sholde,

But suffren and serven ;

For-thi seide the aungel :

Sum rex, sum princeps,

Neutrum fortasse deinceps ;

O qui jura regis

Cristi specialia regis,

Hoc quod agas melius,

Justus es, esto pius.

Nudum jus a te

Vestiri vult pietate ; 270

Qualia vis metere,

Talia grana sere.

Si jus nudatur,

Nudo de jure metatur ;

Si seritur pietas,

De pietate metas.

Thanne greved hym a goliardeis,

A gloton of wordes,

And to the aungel an heigh

Answerde after :

Dum rex a regere 281

Dicatur nomen habere ;

Nomen habet sine re,

Nisi studet jura tenere.

Thanne gan al the commune

Crye in vers of Latyn,

To the kynges counseil ;

Construe who so wolde :

Præcepta regis

Sunt nobis vincula legis.

With that ran ther a route

Of ratons at ones, 292

And smale mees myd hem 293
 Mo than a thousand,

And comen to a counseil
 For the commune profit ;
 For a cat of a contree
 Cam whan hym liked,
 And overleep hem lightliche,
 And laughte hem at his wille,
 And pleide with hem perillousli,
 And possed aboute.

“ For doute of diverse dredes,
 We dar noght wel loke ; 304

And if we grucche of his gamen,
 He wol greven us alle,
 Cracchen us or clawen us,
 And in hise clouches holde,
 That us lotheth the lif
 Er he late us passe.

Mighte we with any wit
 His wille withstonde,
 We mighte be lordes o-lofte,
 And lyven at oure ese.”

A raton of renoun, 315
 Moost renable of tonge,
 Seide for a sovereyn
 Help to hymselfe :

“ I have y-seyen segges,” quod
 “ In the cité of Londone, [he,
 Beren beighes ful brighte
 Abouten hire nekkes,
 And somme colers of crafty werk ;
 Uncoupled thei wenten
 Bothe in wareyne and in waast
 Where hemself liked, 326

And outhur while thei arn ellis-
 As I here telle; [where,
 Were ther a belle on hire beighe,
 By Jhesu, as me thynketh,
 Men myghte witen wher thei wente,
 And away renne !”

“ And right so,” quod that raton,
 “ Reson me sheweth,
 To bugge a belle of bras,
 Or of bright silver,
 And knydden it on a coler
 For oure commune profit, — 338
 Wher he ryt or rest,
 Or renneth to pleye ;
 And if hym list for to laiike,
 Thanne loke we mowen,
 And peeren in his presence
 The while hym pleye liketh ;
 And, if hym wratheth, be war,
 And his way shonye.”

Al this route of ratons
 To this reson thei assented.
 Ac tho the belle was y-brought, 349
 And on the beighe hanged,
 Ther ne was raton in al the route,
 For al the reaume of Fraunce,
 That dorste have bounden the belle
 Aboute the cattes nekke,
 Ne hangen it aboute the cattes hals,
 Al Engelond to wyne.
 Alle helden hem un-hardy,
 And hir counseil feble ;
 And leten hire labour lost
 And al hire longe studie. 360

A mous that muche good 361
 Kouthe, as me thoughte,
 Strook forth sternely,
 And stood bifore hem alle,
 And to the route of ratons
 Reherced these wordes :

“ Though we killen the cat,
 Yet sholde ther come another
 To cacchen us and al oure kynde,
 Though we copen under benches.
 For-thi I counseille al the commune
 To late the cat worthe ; 372

And be we nevere bolde
 The belle hym to shewe ;
 For I herde my sire seyn,
 Is seven yeer y-passed,
 Ther the cat is a kitone
 The court is ful elenge ;
 That witnesseth holy writ,
 Who so wole it rede :

Væ terræ ubi puer rex est ! etc.

For may no renk ther reste have 383
 For ratons by nyghte ;
 The while he caccheth conynges,
 He coveiteth noght youre caroyne,
 But fedeth hym al with venyson :
 Defame we hym nevere.

For bettre is a litel los
 Than a long sorwe,
 The maze among us alle,
 Theigh we mysse a sherewe ;
 For many mennes malt
 We mees wolde destruye,
 And also ye route of ratons 394

Rende mennes clothes. 395

Nere the cat of that court
That can yow over-lepe ;
For hadde ye rattes youre wille,
Ye kouthe noght rule yow selve."

" I seye for me," quod the mous,
" I se so muchel after,
Shal nevere the cat ne the kiton
By my counseil be greved,
Thorugh carpynge of this coler
That costed me nevere.
And though it hadde costned me
Bi-knowen it I nolde, [catel,
But suffren, as hymself wolde,
To doon as hym liketh,
Coupled and uncoupled
To cacche what thei mowe.
For-thi ech a wis wight I warne,
Wite wel his owene."

What this metels by-meneth,
Ye men that ben murye
Devyne ye, for I ne dar,
By deere God in hevene. 417

Yet hoved ther an hundred
In howves of selk,
Sergeantz it bi-semed
That serveden at the barre,
Pleteden for penyes
And poundes the lawe ;
And noght for love of our Lord
Unlose hire lippes ones.
Thow myghtest bettre meete myst
On Malverne hilles,
Than gete a mom of hire mouth,

Til moneie be shewed.

429

Barons and burgeises,
And bonde-men als,
I seigh in this assemblee,
As ye shul here after ;
Baksteres and brewesteres,
And bochiers manye ;
Wollen webbesters,
And weveres of lynnyn,
Taillours and tynkers,
And tollers in markettes,
Masons and mynours,
And many othere craftes.
Of alle kynne lybbynge laborers
Lopen forth somme,
As dikeres and delveres,
That doon hire dedes ille,
And dryveth forth the longe day
With *Dieu save dame Emme*.

440

Cokes and hire knaves
Cryden, " Hote pies, hote !
Goode gees and grys !
Gowe, dyne, gowe !"

451

Taverners until hem
Trewely tolden the same,
Whit wyn of Oseye,
And reed wyn of Gascoigne,
Of the Ryn and of the Rochel,
The roost to defie.
[Al this I saugh slepynge,
And seve sithes more.]

459



Passus Primus de Visione.

WHAT this mountaigne by-
meneth, 460
And the merke dale,
And the feld ful of folk,
I shal yow faire shewe.

A lovely lady of leere,
In lynnyn y-clothed,
Cam down from a castel
And called me faire,
And seide, " Sone, slepestow ?
Sestow this peple,
How bisie thei ben
Alle aboute the maze ? 471
The mooste partie of this peple
That passeth on this erthe,
Have thei worship in this world,
Thei wilne no bettre ;
Of oother hevene than here
Holde thei no tale."

I was a-fered of hire face,
Theigh she fair weere,
And seide, " Mercy, madame,
What is this to meene ?"

" The tour on the toft," quod she,
" Truthe is therinne ; 483

And wolde that ye wroughte, 484
As his word techeth !
For he is fader of feith,
And formed yow alle
Bothe with fel and with face,
And yaf yow fyve wittes,
For to worshipe hym therewith,
While that ye ben here.

And therfore he highte the erthe
To helpe yow echone,
Of wollene, of lynnene,
Of liflode at nede, 495
In mesurable manere
To make yow at ese ;
And comaunded of his curteisie
In commune three thynges,
Are none nedfulle but tho,
And nempne hem I thynke ;
And rekene hem by reson,
Reherce thow hem after.

“ That oon vesture,
From cold thee to save ;
And mete at meel 506
For mysese of thiselve ;
And drynke whan thow driest ;
Ac do noght out of reson,
That thow worthe the wers
Whan thow werche sholdest.

“ For Lot in hise lif-dayes,
For likynge of drynke,
Dide by hise doughtres
That the devel liked,
Delited hym in drynke
As the devel wolde, 517

And leccherie hym laughte, 518
 And lay by hem bothe,
 And al he witte it the wyn
 That wikked dede.

*Inebriamus eum vino, dormiamus-
 que cum eo, ut servare possi-
 mus de patre nostro semen.*

Thorough wyn and thorough wom-
 Ther was Loth acombred, [men
 And there gat in glotonie
 Gerles that were cherles.

“ For-thi dred delitable drynke,
 And thow shalt do the bettre. 530
 Measure is medicine,
 Though thow muchel yerne.
 It is nought al good to the goost
 That the gut asketh,
 Ne liflode to thi likame,
 For a liere hym techeth,
 That is the wrecched world
 Wolde thee bitraye;
 For the fend and thi flesshe
 Folwen togidere. 540

This and that seeth thi soule,
 And seith it in thin herte;
 And for thow sholdest ben y-war,
 I wisse thee the beste.”

“ Madame, mercy !” quod I,
 “ Me liketh wel youre wordes;
 Ac the moneie of this molde
 That men so faste holdeth,
 Tel me to whom, madame,
 That tresour appendeth.” 550

“ Go to the gospel,” quod she,

“ That God seide hymselfen ; 552
 ‘ Tho the poeple hym apposed
 With a peny in the temple,
 Wheither thei sholde therwith
 Worshipe the kyng Cesar.

“ And God asked of hym,
 Of whom spak the lettre,
 And the ymage was lik
 That therinne stondeth.

“ ‘ Cesares,’ thei seiden,
 ‘ We seen it wel echone.’
 “ ‘ *Reddite Cæsari,*’ quod God, 563
 ‘ That *Cæsari* bifalleth,
Et quæ sunt Dei Deo,
 Or ellis ye don ille ;
 For rightfully reson
 Sholde rule yow alle,
 And kynde wit be wardeyn
 Youre welthe to kepe,
 And tutour of youre tresor,
 And take it yow at nede,
 For housbondrie and hii
 Holden togidres.” 574

Thanne I frayned hire faire,
 For hym that me made,
 “ That dongeon in the dale,
 That dredful is of sighte,
 What may it be to meene,
 Madame, I yow biseche ?”

“ That is the castel of Care ;
 Who so comth therinne
 May banne that he born was,
 To bodi or to soule.
 Therinne wonyeth a wight 585

That Wrong is y-hote, 586

Fader of falshede,

And founded it hymselfe.

Adam and Eve

He egged to ille ;

Counseilled Kaym

To killen his brother ;

Judas he japed

With Jewen silver,

And sithen on an eller

Hanged hymselfe.

He is lettere of love, 597

And lieth hem alle

That trusten on his tresour ;

Bitrayeth he hem sonnest."

Thanne hadde I wonder in my wit

What womman it weere,

That swiche wise wordes

Of holy writ shewed ;

And asked hire on the heighe name,

Er she thennes yede,

What she were witterly

That wissed me so faire. 608

" Holi chirche I am," quod she,

" Thow oughtest me to knowe ;

I underfeng thee first,

And the feith taughte ;

And broughtest me borwes

My biddying to fulfille,

And to loven me leelly

The while thi lif dureth."

Thanne I courbed on my knees,

And cried hire of grace ;

And preide hire pitously 619

Preye for my synnes, 620
 And also kenne me kyndely
 On Crist to bi-leve,
 That I myghte werchen his wille
 That wroghte me to man.
 " Teche me to no tresor,
 But tel me this ilke
 How I may save my soule,
 That seint art y-holden."

" Whan alle tresors arn tried,"
 " Treuthe is the beste ; [quod she,
 I do it on *Deus caritas*, 631
 To deme the sothe,
 It is as dereworthe a drury
 As deere God hymselfen :

" Who is trewe of his tonge,
 And telleth noon oother,
 And dooth the werkes therwith,
 And wilneth no man ille,
 He is a God by the gospel
 A-grounde and o-lofte,
 And y-lik to oure lord,
 By seint Lukes wordes. 642
 The clerkes that knowen this,
 Sholde kennen it aboute,
 For cristen and un-cristen
 Cleymeth it echone.

" Kynges and knyghtes
 Sholde kepen it by reson,
 Riden and rappen down
 In reaumes aboute,
 And taken *transgressores*,
 And tyen hem faste,
 Til treuthe hadde y-termyned 653

Hire trespass to the ende. 654

And that is profession apertli
That apendeth to knyghtes ;
And naught to fasten o friday
In fyve score wynter,

But holden with hym and with here
That wolden alle truthe,
And nevere leve hem for love
Ne for lacchyng of silver.

For David in hise dayes
Dubbed knyghtes,
And dide hem sweren on hir swerdes
To serven truthe evere ; 666

And who so passed that point
Was apostata in the ordre.

“ But Crist kyngene kyng
Knyghted ten,
Cherubyn and seraphyn,
Swiche sevene and othere,

And yaf hem myght in his majestee,
The murier hem thoughte,
And over his meene meynne
Made hem archangeles ; 676

Taughte hem by the Trinitee
Treuthe to knowe ;
To be buxom at his biddyng,
He bad hem nought ellis.

“ Lucifer with legions
Lerned it in hevene ;
But for he brak buxomnesse
His blisse gan he tyne,

And fel fro that felawshipe
In a fendes liknesse,
Into a deep derk helle, 687

To dwelle there for evere ; 688
 And mo thousandes myd hym
 Than man kouthe nombre
 Lopen out with Lucifer
 In lothliche forme,
 For thei leveden upon hym
 That lyed in this manere:

*Ponam pedem in aquilone, et similis
 ero altissimo.* [be so,

“ And alle that hoped it myghte
 Noon hevene myghte hem holde,
 But fellen out in fendes liknesse 699
 Nyne dayes togideres,
 Til God of his goodnesse
 Gan stablisse and stynte,
 And garte the hevene to stekie
 And stonden in quiete.

“ Whan thise wikkede wenten out,
 In wonder wise thei fellen ;
 Somme in the eyr, somme in erthe,
 And somme in helle depe ;
 Ac Lucifer lowest lith
 Yet of hem alle, 710
 For pride that he putte out,
 His peyne hath noon ende.
 And alle that werchen with wrong,
 Wende thei shulle,
 After hir deth day
 And dwelle with that sherewe.

“ And tho that werche wel,
 As holy writ telleth,
 And enden as I er seide
 In truthe, that is the beste,
 Mowe be siker that hire soules 721

Shul wende to hevene, 722
 Ther treuthe is in trinitee,
 And troneth hem alle.

For thi I seye, as I seyde er,
 By sighte of thise textes,
 Whan alle tresors arn tried,
 Truthe is the beste ;
 Lereth it thise lewed men,
 For lettred men it knoweth,
 That treuthe is tresor
 The trieste on erthe." [quod I,

" Yet have I no kynde knowyng,"
 " Ye mote kenne me bettre, 734
 By what craft in my cors
 It comseth and where."

" Thow doted daffe," quod she,
 " Dulle are thi wittes ;
 To litel Latyn thow lernedest,
 Leode, in thi youthe."

*Heu michi! quid sterilem duxi
 vitam juvenilem.* [she,

" It is a kynde knowyng," quod
 " That kenneth in thyn herte, 744
 For to loven thi Lord

Levere than thiselve,
 No dedly synne to do,
 Deye theigh thow sholdest ;
 This I trowe be truthe,
 Who kan teche thee bettre.

" Loke thow suffre hym to seye,
 And sithen lere it after ;
 For truthe telleth that love
 Is triacle of hevene.
 May no synne be on hym seene, 755

That useth that spice, 756
And alle hise werkes be wroughte
With love as hym liste; [thyng,
And lered it Moyses for the leveste
And moost lik to hevene,
And al so the plentee of pees
Moost precious of vertues;
For hevene myghte nat holden it,
It was so hevy of hymself,
Til it hadde of the erthe
Eten his fille.

“And whan it hadde of this fold 767
Flesshe and blood taken,
Was nevere leef upon lynde
Lighter therafter,
And portatif and persaunt
As the point of a nedle,
That myghte noon armure it lette,
Ne none heighe walles.

“ For-thi is love ledere
Of the Lordes folk of hevene,
And a meene, as the mair is [mune;
Bitwene the kyng and the com-
Right so is love a ledere, 779
And the law shapeth,
Upon man for hise mysdedes
The mercymment he taxeth.
And for to knowen it kyndely
It comseth by myght,
And in the herte there is the heed
And the heighe welle;
For in kynde knowynge in herte,
Ther a myght bigynneth;
And that falleth to the fader 789

That formed us alle, 790

Loked on us with love,

And leet his sone dye

Mekely for oure mysdedes,

To amenden us alle.

And yet wolde he hem no wo

That wroughte hym that peyne,

But mekely with mouthe

Mercy bisoughte,

To have pité of that peple

That peyned hym to dethe.

“ There myghtow sen ensample

In hymself oone, 802

That he was myghtful and meke,

And mercy gan graunte

To hem that hengen hym on heigh

And his herte thirled.

“ For-thi I rede yow, riche,

Haveth ruthe of the povere;

Though ye be myghtful to mote,

Beeth meke in youre werkes,

For the same mesures that ye mete,

Amys outhur ellis, 812

Ye shulle ben weyen therwith

Whan ye wenden hennes.

*Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis,
remetietur vobis.*

“ For though ye be trewe of youre

And troweliche wyne, [tonge,

And as chaste as a child

That in chirche wepeth,

But if ye loven leelly

And lene the povere,

Swich good as God yow sent 823

Goodliche parteth, 824
 Ye ne have namoore merite
 In masse nor in houres,
 Than Malkyn of hire maydenhede
 That no man desireth.

“ For James the gentile
 Jugged in hise bokes,
 That feith withouten the feet
 Is right no thyng worthi,
 And as deed as a dore-tree,
 But if the dedes folwe. 834
Fides sine operibus mortua est, etc. ”

“ For-thi chastité withouten charité
 Worth cheyned in helle ;
 It is as lewed as a lampe
 That no light is inne.
 Manye chapeleyns arn chaste,
 Ac charité is aweye ;
 Are no men avarouser than hii
 Whan thei ben avaunced,
 Unkynde to hire kyn,
 And to alle cristene
 Chewen hire charité, 846
 And chiden after moore ;
 Swiche chastité withouten charité
 Worth cheyned in helle.

“ Manye curatours kepen hem
 Clene of hire bodies ;
 Thei ben acombred with coveitise,
 Thei konne noght doon it from hem,
 So harde hath avarice
 Y-hasped hem togideres,
 And that is no truthe of the Trinité,
 But tricherie of helle, 857

And lernynge to lewed men 858

The latter for to deele.

For-thi thise wordes

Ben writen in the gospel,

Date, et dabitur vobis,

For I deele yow alle,

And that is the lok of love,

And leteth out my grace,

To conforten the carefule

A-combred with synne.

“ Love is leche of lif,

And next oure Lord selve, 869

And also the graithe gate

That goth into hevene ;

For-thi I seye, as I seide

Er by the textes,

Whan alle tresors ben tried,

Treuthe is the beste.

“ Now have I told thee what truthe

That no tresor is bettre ; [is,

I may no lenger lenge thee with,

Now loke thee oure Lorde.” 879



*Passus Secundus de Visione, ut
supra.*

YET I courbed on my knees, 880
And cried hire of grace,
And seide, "Mercy, madame,
For Marie love of hevene,
That bar that blisful barn
That boughte us on the rode,
Kenne me by som craft
To knowe the false."

"Loke up on thi left half,
And lo where he stondeth!
Bothe' Fals and Favel,
And hire feeres manye." 891

I loked on my left half,
As the lady me taughte,
And was war of a womman
Worthiliche y-clothed,
Purfiled with pelure
The fyneste upon erthe,
Y-corowned with a coroune,
The kyng hath noon better;
Fetisliche hire fyngres
Were fretted with gold wyr,
And theron rede rubies
As rede as any gleede, 903

And diamaundes of derrest pris, 904
 And double manere saphires,
 Orientals and ewages,
 Envenymes to destroye.

Hire robe was ful riche,
 Of reed scarlet engreyned,
 With ribanes of reed gold
 And of riche stones.

Hire array me ravysshed,
 Swich richesse saugh I nevere ;
 I hadde wonder what she was,
 And whos wif she were. 915

“What is this womman,” quod I,
 “So worthili atired?”

“That is Mede the mayde,” quod
 “Hath noyed me ful ofte, [she,
 And y-lakked my lemman
 That Leautee is hoten,
 And bi-lowen hire to lordes
 That lawes han to kepe.

“In the popes paleis
 She is pryvee as myselve ;
 But soothnesse wolde noght so, 926
 For she is a bastarde ;
 For fals was hire fader
 That hath a fikel tonge,
 And nevere sooth seide
 Sithen he com to erthe ;
 And Mede is manered after hym,
 Right as kynde asketh
Qualis pater talis filius.

Bonus arbor bonum fructum facit.

“I oughte ben hyere than she,
 I kam of a bettre ; 937

My fader the grete God is 938
 And ground of alle graces,
 So God withouten gynnyng,
 And I his goode doughter,
 And hath yeven me mercy
 To marie with myselve,
 And what man be merciful
 And leelly me love,
 Shal be my lord and I his leef
 In the heighe hevene.

“ And what man taketh Mede,
 Myn heed dar I legge, 949
 That he shal lese for hire love
 A lappe of *caritatis*.

“ How construeth David the king
 Of men that taketh Mede,
 And men of this moolde
 That maynteneth truthe,
 And how ye shul save yourself,
 The sauter bereth witnesse:
Domine, quis habitabit in taberna-
culo tuo, etc. [married

“ And now worth this Mede y-
 Unto a maused sherewe,
 To oon fals fikel tonge,
 A fendes biyete;
 Favel thorough his faire speche
 Hath this folk enchaunted,
 And al is Lieres ledynge,
 That she is thus y-wedded.

“ To-morwe worth y-made
 The maydenes bridale, [wilt,
 And there myghtow witen, if thow
 Whiche thei ben alle 971

That longen to that lordshipe, 972
The lasse and the moore.

Knowe hem there, if thow kanst,
And kepe thow thi tonge,
And lakke hem noght, but lat hem
Til leauté be justice, [worthe,
And have power to punysshē hem,
Thanne put forth thi reson.

Now I bikenne thee Crist," quod
"And his clene moder, [she,
And lat no conscience acombte thee
For coveitise of Mede." 983

Thus lefte me that lady
Liggyng a-slepe;
And how Mede was y-mariēd
In metels me thoughte,
That al the riche retenaunce
That regneth with the false,
Were boden to the bridale
On bothe two sides,
Of alle manere of men
The meene and the riche;
To marien this mayde 994
Were many men assembled,
As of knyghtes and of clerkes,
And oother commune peple,
As sisours and somonours,
Sherreves and hire clerkes,
Bedelles and baillifs,
And brocours of chaffare,
Forgoers and vitailleurs,
And advokettes of the arches;
I kan noght rekene the route
That ran aboute Mede. 1005

Ac Symonie and Cyvyll, 1006
 And sisours of courtes,
 Were moost pryvee with Mede
 Of any men, me thoughte.

Ac Favel was the firste
 That fette hire out of boure,
 And as a brocour broughte hire
 To be with Fals enjoyned.

Whan Symonye and Cyvyll
 Seighe hir bothe wille,
 Thei assented, for silver,
 To seye as bothe wolde. 1017

Thanne leep Liere forth, and seide,
 "Lo here a chartre!"

That Gile with hise grete othes
 Gaf hem togidere,
 And preide Cyvyll to see,
 And Symonye to rede it.

Thanne Symonye and Cyvyll
 Stonden forth bothe,
 And unfoldeth the feffement
 That Fals hath y-maked,
 And thus bigynnen thise gomes 1028
 To greden ful heighe :

Sciunt præsentes et futuri, etc.

Witeth and witnesseth,
 That wonieth upon this erthe,
 That Mede is y-mariéd
 Moore for hire goodes
 Than for any vertue or fairnesse,
 Or any free kynde.
 Falsnesse is fayn of hire,
 For he woot hire riche ;
 And Favel with his fikel speche 1039

Feffeth by this chartre, 1040
 To be princes in pride
 And poverte to despise,
 To bakbite and to bosten,
 And bere fals witnesse,
 To scorne and to scolde,
 And sclaudre to make,
 Unbuxome and bolde
 To breke the ten hestes.

And the erldom of Envye
 And Wrathe togideres,
 With the chastilet of Chestre, 1051
 And Chaterynge out of reson,

The countee of Coveitise,
 And alle the costes aboute,
 That is Usure and Avarice,
 Al I hem graunte,
 In bargaynes and in brocages,
 With al the burghe of Thefte.

And al the lordshipe of Leccherie
 In lengthe and in brede,
 As in werkes and in wordes,
 And in waitynges with eighes, 1062
 And in wedes and in wisshynges,
 And with ydel thoughtes,
 There as wil wolde
 And werkmanshipe fayleth.

Glotonye he gaf hem ek,
 And grete othes togidere,
 And al day to drynken
 At diverse tavernes,
 And there to jangle and jape,
 And jugge hir even cristen ;
 And in fastynge dayes to frete 1073

Er ful tyme were, 1074
 And thanne to sitten and soupen
 Till sleep hem assaille;
 And bredden as burghe swyn,
 And bedden hem esily,
 Til sleuthe and sleep
 Sliken hise sydes, [hem so
 And thanne wanhope to awaken
 With no wil to amende,
 For he leveth be lost,
 This is hir laste ende. 1084

And thei to have and to holde,
 And hire heires after,
 A dwellynge with the devel,
 And dampned be for evere,
 With alle the appurtinaunces of
 purgatorie
 Into the pyne of helle.

Yeldyng for this thyng,
 At one dayes tyme,
 Hire soules to Sathan,
 To suffre with hym peynes, 1095
 And with hym to wonye with wo
 While God is in hevene.

In witnesse of which thyng,
 Wrong was the firste,
 And Piers the pardoner
 Of Paulynes doctrine,
 Bette the bedel
 Of Bokyngham shire,
 Reynald the reve
 Of Rutland sokene,
 Maude the millere,
 And many mo othere. 1107

In the date of the devel 1108
 This dede I ensele,
 By sighte of Sire Symonie
 And Cyvyles leewe.

Thanne tened hym Theologie,
 Whan he this tale herde ;
 And seide unto Cyvyle,
 " Now sorwe mote thow have,
 Swiche weddynges to werche,
 To wrathe with truthe ;
 And er this weddyng be wroght,
 Wo thee bitide ! 1119

" For Mede is muliere
 Of Amendes engendred,
 And God graunteth to gyve
 Mede to Truthe ;
 And thow hast gyven hire to a gilour ;
 Now God gyve thee sorwe !
 Thi text telleth thee noght so,
 Truthe woot the sothe ;
 For *Dignus est operarius*
 His hire to have,
 And thow hast fest hire to Fals, 1130
 Fy on thi lawe !
 For al bi lesynges thow lyvest
 And lecherouse werkes.
 Symonye and thiself
 Shenden holi chirche ;
 The notaries and ye
 Noyen the peple ;
 Ye shul a-biggen it bothe,
 By God that me made !

" Wel ye witen, wernardes,
 But if youre wit faille, 1141

That Fals is feithlees 1142
And fikel in hise werkes,
And was a bastarde y-bore
Of Belsabubbes kynne;
And Mede is muliere,
A maiden of goode,
And myghte kisse the kyng
For cosyn, and she wolde.

“ For-thi wercheth by wisdom,
And by wit also;
And ledeth hire to Londone,
There it is y-shewed, 1153
If any lawe wol loke,
Thei ligge togideres;
And though justices juggen hire
To be joyned to Fals,
Yet be war of weddyng;
For witty is Truthe,
And Conscience is of his counseil,
And knoweth yow echone,
And if he fynde yow in defaute
And with the false holde,
It shal bi-sitte youre soules 1164
Ful soure at the laste.”

Herto assenteth Cyvyle,
Ac Symonye ne wolde,
Til he hadde silver for his service,
And also the notaries.

Thanne fette Favel forth
Floryns y-nowe,
And bad Gile to gyven
Gold al aboute,
And namely to the notaries
That hem noon ne faille, 1175

And fesse false witnesses 1176
 With floryns y-nowe,
 " For thei may Mede a-maistrye,
 And maken at my wille."

Tho this gold was y-gyve,
 Gret was the thonkyng
 To Fals and to Favel
 For hire faire giftes,
 And comen to conforten
 From care the false,
 And seiden, " Certes, sire,
 Cessen shul we nevere, 1187
 Til Mede be thi wedded wif
 Thorugh wittes of us alle ;
 For we have Mede a-maistried
 With oure murie speche,
 That she graunteth to goon,
 With a good wille,
 To London, to loken
 If the lawe wolde
 Juggen yow joyntly
 In joie for evere."

Thanne was Falsnesse fayn, 1198
 And Favel as blithe,
 And leten somone alle segges
 In shires aboute,
 And bad hem alle be bown,
 Beggars and othere,
 To wenden with hem to Westmyn-
 To witnesse this dede. [stre

Ac thanne cared thei for caples
 To carien hem thider,
 And Favel fette forth thanne
 Foles y-nowe, 1209

And sette Mede upon a sherreve
Shoed al newe.

And Fals sat on a sisour,
That softeli trotted;
And Favel on a flaterere
Fetisly atired.

Tho hadde notaries none,
Anoyed thei were,
For Symonye and Cyvyll
Sholde on hire feet gange.

Ac thanne swoor Symonye,
And Cyvyll bothe, 1221
That somonours sholde be sadeled
And serven hem echone,
And late apparaille thise provisours
In palfreyes wise,
Sire Symonye hymself
Shal sitte upon hir bakkes.

“Denes and southdenes,
Drawe yow togideres,
Erchdekenes and officials,
And alle youre registrers,
Lat saddle hem with silver 1232
Oure synne to suffre,
As avoutrye and divorces,
And derne usurie,
To bere bisshopes aboute
A-brood in visitynge.

“Paulynes pryvees
For pleintes in consistorie,
Shul serven myself
That Cyvyle is nempned.

“And cart-sadle the commissarie,
Oure cart shal he lede, 1243

And fecchen us vitailles 1244
At *Fornicatores*.

And maketh of Lyere a lang cart
To leden alle thise othere,
As freres and faitours,
That on hire feet rennen."

And thus Fals and Favel
Fareth forth togideres,
And Mede in the middes,
And alle thise men after.

I have no tome to telle
The tail that hire folwed; 1255
Ac Gyle was for-goer,
And gyed hem alle.

Sothnesse seigh hem wel,
And seide but litel,
And priked his palfrey,
And passed hem alle,
And com to the kynges court,
And Conscience it tolde;
And Conscience to the kyng
Carped it after. 1265

"Now, by Crist," quod the kyng,
"And I cacche myghte
Fals or Favel,
Or any of hise feeris,
I wolde be wroken of tho wrecches
That wercheth so ille,
And doon hem hange by the hals,
And alle that hem maynteneth;
Shal nevere man of this molde
Meyn-prise the leeste,
But right as the lawe wol loke,
Lat falle on hem alle." 1276

And comaunded a constable, 1278
That com at the firste,
To attachen tho tyrauntz,
“ For any thyng I hote,
And fettreth faste Falsnesse,
For any kynnes giftes,
And girdeth of Gyles heed,
And lat hym go no ferther ;
And if ye lacche Lyere,
Lat hym noght ascapen
Er he be put on the pillory,
For any preyere, I hote ; 1289
And bryngeth Mede to me
Maugree hem alle.”

Drede at the dore stood,
And the doom herde,
And how the kyng comaunded
Constables and sergeauntz
Falsnesse and his felawshipe
To fettren and to bynden.

Thanne Drede wente wyghtliche,
And warned the False,
And bad hym fle for fere, 1300
And hise felawes alle.

Falsnesse for fere thanne
Fleigh to the ffreres,
And Gyle dooth hym to go,
A-gast for to dye ;
Ac marchauntz metten with hym
And made hym abide,
And bi-shetten hym in hire shoppes
To shewen hire ware,
Apparaild hym as apprentice
The peple to serve. 1311

Lightliche Lyere 1312
Leep away thanne,
Lurkyng thorough lanes,
To-lugged of manye.
He was nowher welcome,
For his manye tales,
Over al y-honted,
And y-hote trusse,
Til pardoners hadde pité,
And pulled hym into house.
They wesshen hym and wiped hym,
And wounden hym in cloutes, 1323
And senten hym with seles
On Sondayes to chirches,
And yeven pardoun for pens
Pounde-mele aboute.

Thanne lourede leches,
And lettres thei sente,
That he sholde wonye with hem
Watres to loke.

Spycers speken with hym,
To spien hire ware ;
For he kouthe of hir craft, 1334
And knew manye gommies.

And mynstrales and messagers
Mette with hym ones,
And helden hym an half-yeer
And ellevené dayes.

Freres with fair speche
Fetten hym pennies,
And for knowynge of comeres
Coped hym as a frere ;
Ac he hath leve to lepen out,
As ofte as hym liketh, 1345

And is welcome whan he wile, 1346
And woneth with hem ofte.

Alle fledden for fere,
And flowen into hernes;
Save Mede the mayde,
Na-mo dorste abide.
Ac trewely to telle,
She trembled for drede,
And ek wepte and wrong,
Whan she was attached.

1355





Passus Tertius de Visione, ut supra.

NOW is Mede the mayde, 1356
And na-mo of hem alle,
With bedeles and with baillies
Brought bifore the kyng.

The kyng called a clerk,
Kan I noght his name,
To take Mede the maide
And maken hire at ese.
“I shal assayen hire myself,
And soothliche appose,
What man of this moolde
That hire were levest. 1367
And if she werche bi wit,
And my wil folwe,
I wol forgyven hire this gilt,
So me God helpe !”

Curteisly the clerk thanne,
As the kyng highte,
Took Mede bi the myddel
And broghte hire into chambre ;
And ther was murthe and mynstral-
Mede to plese. [cie,

They that wonyeth in Westmyn-
stre
Worshipeth hire alle, 1380

Gentilliche with joye ; 1381
The justices somme
Busked hem to the bour,
Ther the burde dwellede,
To conforten hire kyndely,
By clergies leve ;
And seiden, "Mourne noght, Mede,
Ne make thow no sorwe ;
For we wol wisse the kyng,
And thi wey shape,
To be wedded at thi wille,
And wher thee leef liketh, 1392
For al Consciencences cast
Or craft, as I trowe."

Mildely Mede thanne
Merciede hem alle
Of hire grete goodnesse,
And gaf hem echone
Coupes of clene gold,
And coppes of silver,
Rynges with rubies,
And riches manye ;
The leeste man of hire meynee 1403
A moton of golde.
Than laughte thei leve
Thise lordes at Mede.

With that comen clerkes
To conforten hire the same,
And beden hire be blithe ;
"For we beth thyne owene,
For to werche thi wille,
The while thow myght laste."

Hendiliche heo thanne
Bi-highte hem the same, 1414

To loven hem lelly, 1415
 And lordes to make,
 And in the consistorie at the court
 Do callen hire names;
 "Shal no lewednesse lette
 The leode that I lovye,
 That he ne worth first avaunced;
 For I am bi-knowen,
 Ther konnyng clerkes
 Shul klokke bi-hynde."

Thanne cam ther a confessour,
 Coped as a frere; 1426
 To Mede the mayde
 He meved thise wordes,
 And seide ful softely,
 In shrift as it were,
 "Theigh lewed men and lered men
 Hadde leyen by thee bothe,
 And Falsnesse hadde y-folwed thee
 Alle thise fifty wynter,
 I shal assoille thee myself
 For a seem of whete,
 And also be thi bedeman, 1437
 And bere wel thi message
 Amonges knyghtes and clerkes,
 Conscience to torne."

Thanne Mede for hire mysdedes
 To that man kneled,
 And shrof hire of hire sherewed-
 Shamelees, I trowe; [nesse,
 Tolde hym a tale,
 And took hym a noble,
 For to ben hire bedeman
 And hire brocour als. 1448

Ac God to alle good folk 1483
 Swich graynge defendeth,
 To writen in wyndowes
 Of hir wel dedes,
 An aventure pride be peynted there,
 And pomp of the world;
 For Crist knoweth thi conscience,
 And thi kynde wille,
 And thi cost and thi coveitise,
 And who the catel oughte.

For-thi I lere yow, lordes,
 Leveth swiche werkes; 1494
 To writen in wyndowes
 Of youre wel dedes,
 Or to greden after Goddes men
 Whan ye dele doles,
 On aventure ye have youre hire here,
 And youre hevene als.

Nesciat sinistra quid faciat dextra.

Lat noght thi left half
 Late ne rathe
 Wite what thow werchest
 With thi right syde; 1505
 For thus by the gospel
 Goode men doon hir almesse.

Maires and maceres,
 That menes ben bitwene
 The kyng and the comune
 To kepe the lawes,
 To punysshe on pillories
 And pynynge-stooles,
 Brewesters and baksters,
 Bochiers and cokes,
 For thise are men on this molde 1516

That moost harm wercheth 1517
 To the povere peple
 That percel-mele buggen;
 For thei enpoisone the peple
 Pryveliche and ofte,
 Thei richen thorough regratrie,
 And rentes hem biggen,
 With that the povere peple
 Sholde putte in hire wombe.
 For toke thei on trewely,
 Thei tymbred nought so heighe,
 Ne boughte none burgages, 1528
 Be ye ful certeyne.

Ac Mede the mayde
 The mair hath bi-sought
 Of alle swiche selleris
 Silver to take,
 Or presentz withouten pens,
 As pieces of silver,
 Rynges or oother richesse,
 The regratiers to mayntene;
 "For my love," quod that lady,
 "Love hem echone, 1539
 And suffre hem to selle
 Som del ayeins reson."

Salomon the sage
 A sermon he made,
 For to amenden maires
 And men that kepen lawes;
 And tolde hem this teme,
 That I telle thynke,
Ignis devorabit tabernacula eorum
qui libenter accipiunt munera,
etc. 1550

Among thise lettrede leodes 1551
 This Latyn is to mene,
 That fir shal falle and brenne
 Al to bloo asks
 The houses and homes
 Of hem that desireth
 Yiftes or yeres-yeves
 By cause of hire offices.

The kyng fro the conseil cam,
 And called after Mede,
 And of sente hire as swithe
 With sergeauntz manye, 1562
 And broughte hire to boure
 With blisse and with joye.

Curteisly the kyng thanne
 Comsed to telle,
 To Mede the mayde
 He meveth thise wordes,
 "Unwittily, womman,
 Wroght hastow ofte,
 Ac worse wroghtestow nevere
 Than tho thow Fals toke.
 But I forgyve thee that gilt, 1573
 And graunte thee my grace;
 Hennes to thi deeth day
 Do so na-moore.

"I have a knyght Conscience,
 Cam late fro biyonde,
 If he wilneth thee to wif
 Wiltow hym have?"

"Ye, lord," quod that lady,
 "Lord forbede it ellis!
 But I be holly at youre heste,
 Lat hange me soone." 1584

And thanne was Conscience called
To come and appere
Bifore the kyng and his conseil,
As clerkes and othere.

Knelynge Conscience
To the kyng louted,
To wite what his wille were
And what he do wolde.

“Woltow wedde this womman,”
“If I wole assente? [quod the kyng,
For she is fayn of thi felaweshipe,
For to be thi make.” 1596

Quod Conscience to the kyng,
“Crist it me forbede!
Er I wedde swich a wif,
Wo me bitide!
For she is frele of hire feith,
Fikel of hire speche,
And maketh men mysdo
Many score tymes;
Trust of hire tresor
Bitrayeth ful manye.

“Wyves and widewes 1607
Wantonnes she techeth,
And lereth hem lecherie
That loveth hire giftes.
Youre fader she felled
Thorugh false biheste,
And hath enpoisoned popes,
And peired holy chirche.
Is noght a bettre baude,
By hym that me made!
Bitwene hevene and helle,
In erthe though men soughte. 1618

For she is tikel of hire tail, 1619
And tale-wis of hire tonge;
As commune as a cartwey
To ech a knave that walketh,
To monkes, to mynstrales,
To meseles in hegges.

“ Sisours and somonours,
Swiche men hire preiseth;
Sherreves of shires
Were shent if she ne were;
For she dooth men lese hire lond
And hire lif bothe; 1630
She leteth passe prisoners,
And paieth for hem ofte,
And gyveth the gailers gold
And grotes togidres,
To unfettre the fals
Fle where hym liketh;
And taketh the trewe bi the top
And tieth hem faste,
And hangeth hem for hatrede
That harm dide nevere.

“ To be corsed in consistorie 1641
She counteth noght a bene;
For she copeth the commissarie,
And coteth hise clerkes.
She is assoiled as soone
As hireself liketh;
And may neigh as muche do
In a monthe one,
As youre secret seel
In sixe score dayes.
For she is pryvee with the pope,
Provisours it knoweth; 1652

For sire Symonie and hirselve
Seleth hire bulles.

“ She blesseth thise bisshopes,
Theigh thei be lewed;
Provendreth persones,
And preestes maynteneth,
To have lemmans and lotebies
Alle hire lif daies,
And bryngeth forth barnes
Ayein forbode lawes.
Ther she is wel with the kyng,
Wo is the reaume; 1664
For she is favourable to fals,
And de-fouleth truthe ofte.

“ By Jhesus ! with hire jeweles
Youre justices she shendeth,
And lith ayein the lawe,
And letteth hym the gate,
That feith may noght have his forth,
Hire floryns go so thikke.
She ledeth the lawe as hire list,
And love-daies maketh,
And doth men lese thorough hire love,
That lawe myghte wyne
The maze for a mene man,
Though he mote hire evere.
Lawe is so lordlich
And looth to maken ende,
Withouten presentz or pens
She pleseth wel fewe.

“ Barons and burgeises
She bryngeth in sorwe,
And al the comune in care
That coveiten lyve in truthe; 1686

For clergie and coveitise 1687

She coupleth togidres.

This is the lif of that lady ;

Now Lord gyve hire sorwe!

And alle that maynteneth hire men,

Meschaunce hem bitide !

For povere men may have no power

To pleyne hem, though thei smerte.

Swich a maister is Mede

Among men of goode."

Thanne mournede Mede,

And mened hire to the kynge 1698

To have space to speke,

Spede if she myghte.

The kyng graunted hire grace,

With a good wille,

" Excuse thee, if thow kanst ;

I kan na-moore seggen.

For Conscience accuseth thee,

To congeien thee for evere."

" Nay lord," quod that lady,

" Leveth hym the werse,

Whan ye witen witterly 1709

Wher the wrong liggeth.

Ther that meschief is gret,

Mede may helpe.

And thow knowest, Conscience,

I kam noght to chide

Ne deprave thi persone,

With a proud herte.

Wel thow woost, wernarde,

But if thow wolt gabbe,

Thow hast hanged on myn half

Ellevene tymes, 1720

And also griped my gold, 1721
Gyve it where thee liked ;
And whi thou wrathest thee now,
Wonder me thynketh.
Yet I may as I myghte
Menske thee with giftes,
And mayntene thi manhode
Moore than thou knowest.

“ Ac thou hast famed me foule
Bifore the kyng here ;
For killed I nevere no kyng
Ne counseiled thereafter, 1732
Ne dide as thou demest
I do it on the kynge.

“ In Normandie was he noght
Noyed for my sake ;
Ac thou thiself soothly
Shamedest hym ofte,
Crope into a cabane
For cold of thi nayles,
Wendest that wynter
Wolde han y-lasting evere,
And dreddest to be ded 1743
For a dym cloude,
And hyedest homward
For hunger of thi wombe.

“ Withouten pité, pilour,
Povere men thou robbedest ;
And bere hire bras at thi bak
To Caleis to selle,
Ther I laste with my lord,
His lif for to save.
I made his men murye,
And mournynge lette ; 1754

I batred hem on the bak, 1755
And boldede hire hertes,
And dide hem hoppe for hope
To have me at wille.
Hadde I ben marchal of his men,
By Marie of hevene !
I dorste have leyd my lif,
And no lasse wedde,
He sholde have be lord of that lond
In lengthe and in brede,
And also kyng of that kith
His kyn for to helpe, 1766
The leeste brol of his blood
A barones piere.

“ Cowardly thow, Conscience,
Conseiledest hym thennes,
To leven his lordshipe
For a litel silver,
That is the richeste reaume
That reyn over-hoveth.

“ It bi-cometh to a kyng
That kepeth a reaume,
To yeve mede to men, 1777
That mekely hym serveth,
To aliens and to alle men,
To honouren hem with giftes ;
Mede maketh hym bi-loved
And for a man holden.

“ Emperours and erles,
And alle manere lordes,
For giftes han yonge men
To renne and to ryde.

“ The pope and alle the prelates
Presentz underfongen, 1783

And medeth men hemselven 1789
To mayntene hir lawes.

“Sergeauntz for hire servyce,
We seeth wel the sothe,
Taken mede of hir maistres,
As thei mowe acorde.

“Beggeres for hir biddynge,
Bidden men mede.

“Mynstrales for hir myrthe,
Mede thei aske.

“The kyng hath mede of his men,
To make pees in londe. 1800

“Men that teche children,
Craven after mede.

“Preestes that prechen the peple
To goode, asken mede,
And massepens and hire mete
At the meel-tymes.

“Alle kynne craftes men
Craven mede for hir prentices.

“Marchauntz and Mede
Mote nede go togideres.

No wight, as I wene, 1811
Withouten mede may libbe.”

Quod the kyng to Conscience,
“By Crist! as me thynketh,
Mede is wel worthi
The maistrie to have.”

“Nay,” quod Conscience to the
And kneled to the erthe, [kyng,
“Ther are two manere of medes,
My lord, with youre leve.

“That oon God of his grace
Graunteth in his blisse 1822

To tho that wel werchen, 1823

While thei ben here ;

The prophete precheth therof,

And putte it in the Sauter,

Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo? [wones,

“Lord, who shal wonye in thi

And with thyne holy seintes,

Or resten in thyne holy hilles ?

This asketh David ;

And David assoileth it hymself,

As the Sauter telleth. 1834

Qui ingreditur sine macula et operatur justitiam.

“Tho that entren of o colour,

And of one wille,

And han y-wroght werkes

With right and with reson ;

And he that useth noght

The lyf of usurie,

And enformeth povere men,

And pursueth truthe.

Qui pecuniam suam non dedit ad usuram, et munera super innoc.
etc. [cent,

“And alle that helpen the inno-

And holden with the rightfulle,

Withouten mede doth hem good,

And the truthe helpeth,

Swiche manere men, my lord,

Shul have this firste mede

Of God at a gret nede,

Whan thei gon hennes. [lees,

“Ther is another mede mesure-

That maistres desireth, 1857

To mayntene mysdoers

Mede thei take,

And therof seith the Sauter

In a salmes ende,

*In quorum manibus iniquitates
sunt, dextra eorum repleta
est muneribus.*

“ And he that gripeth hir gold,
So me God helpe!

Shal abien it bittre,

Or the book lieth. 1868

“ Preestes and persons

That plesynge desireth,

That taken mede and moneie

For masses that thei syngeth,

Taken hire mede here,

As Mathew us techeth.

*Amen, Amen, recipiebant mercedem
suam.*

“ That laborers and lowe folk

Taken of hire maistres,

It is no manere mede, 1879

But a mesurable hire.

“ In marchaundise is no mede,

I may it wel avowe,

It is a permutacion apertly,

A penyworth for another.

“ Ac reddestow nevere *Regum?*

Thow recrayed Mede,

Whi the vengeaunce fel

On Saul and on his children?

God sente to Saul

By Samuel the prophete, 1890

That Agag of Amalec, 1891
 And al his peple after,
 Sholden deye for a dede
 That doon hadde hire eldres.

“ For-thi seide Samuel to Saul,
 ‘ God hymself hoteth
 Thee be buxom at his biddyng,
 His wil to fulfille ;
 Weend to Amalec with thyn oost,
 And what thow fyndest there sle it,
 Burnes and beestes
 Bren hem to dethe, 1902
 Widwes and wyves,
 Wommen and children,
 Moebles and un-moebles,
 And al thow myght fynde,
 Bren it, bere it noght away,
 Be it never so riche,
 For mede ne for monee,
 Loke thow destruye it,
 Spille it and spare it noght,
 Thow shalt spede the better.’

“ And for he coveited hir catel,
 And the kyng spared,
 Forbar hym and his beestes bothe,
 As the Bible witnesseth,
 Oother wise than he was
 Warned of the prophete,
 God seide to Samuel
 That Saul sholde deye,
 And al his seed for that synne
 Shenfulliche ende.
 Swich a meschief Mede made
 Saul the kyng to have, 1924

That God hated hym for evere, 1925
And alle hise heires after.

“ The culorum of this cas
Kepe I noght to telle,
On aventure it noyed men,
Noon ende wol I make,
For so is this world went
With hem that han power,
That who so seith hem sothest
Is sonnest y-blamed.

“ Conscience knowe this,
For kynde wit it me taughte, 1936
That Reson shal regne
And reaumes governe,
And right as Agag hadde,
Happe shul somme,
Samuel shal sleen hym,
And Saul shal be blamed,
And David shal be diademed,
And daunten hem alle ;
And oon cristene kyng
Kepen hem alle.
Shal na-moore Mede be maister,
As she is nouthe ;
Ac love and lowenesse
And leaute togideres,
Thise shul ben maistres on moolde,
Truthe to save. [truthe,

“ And who so trespasseth ayein
Or taketh ayein his wille,
Leauté shal don hym lawe,
And no lif ellis ;
Shal no sergeaunt for his service
Were a silk howve, 1958

Ne no pelure in his cloke 1959
 For pledynge at the barre.
 Mede of mysdoeres
 Maketh manye lordes,
 And over lordes lawes
 Ruleth the reaumes.

“Ac kynde love shal come yit,
 And conscience togideres,
 And make of lawe a laborer;
 Swich love shal arise,
 And swich a pees among the peple,
 And a perfit truthe, 1970
 That Jewes shul wene in hire wit,
 And wexen wonder glade,
 That Moyses or Messie
 Be come into this erthe,
 And have wonder in hire hertes
 That men beth so trewe.

“Alle that beren baselarde,
 Brood swerd or launce,
 Ax outhur hachet,
 Or any wepene ellis,
 Shal be demed to the deeth, 1981
 But if he do it smythyne
 Into sikel or to sithe,
 To shaar or to kultour;
Conflabunt gladios suos in vomeres,
etc.

“Ech man to pleye with a plow,
 Pykoise or spade,
 Spynne or sprede donge,
 Or spille hymself with sleuthe.

“Preestes and persons
 With *Placebo* to hunte, 1992

And dyngen upon David 1993
 Eche day til eve.

Huntynge or haukyng

If any of hem use,

His boost of his benefice

Worth by-nomen hym after.

Shal neither kyng ne knyght,

Constable ne meire,

Overlede the commune,

Ne to the court sompne,

Ne putte hem in panel

To doon hem plichte hir truthe ;

But after the dede that is doon

Oon doom shal rewarde,

Mercy or no mercy,

As truthe wole acorde. [court,

“ Kynges court and commune

Consistorie and chapitle,

Al shal be but oon court,

And oon baron be justice.

Thanne worth Trewe-tonge a tidy

That tened me nevere; [man,

Batailles shul none be, 2015

Ne no man bere wepene ;

And what smyth that any smytheth,

Be smyte therwith to dethe.

*Non levabit gens contra gentem
 gladium, etc.*

And er this fortune falle,

Fynde men shul the worste,

By sixe sonnes and a shipe,

And half a shef of arwes,

And the myddel of a moone,

Shal make the Jewes to torne, 2026

And Sarzynes for that sighte 2027
 Shul synge *Gloria in excelsis, etc.*
 For Makometh and Mede
 Mys-happe shul that tyme,
 For *melius est bonum nomen quam*
divitiæ multæ."

Al so wroth as the wynd
 Weex Mede in a while,
 "I kan no Latyn," quod she,
 "Clerkes wite the sothe;
 Se what Salomon seith
 In Sapience bokes, 2038
 That thei that gyven giftes
 The victorie wynneth,
 And moost worshiþe hadde ther
 As holy writ telleth: [with,
Honorem adquirit qui dat munera,
etc." [science,

"Leve wel, lady," quod Con-
 "That thi Latyn be trewe;
 Ac thow art lik a lady
 That radde a lesson ones,
 Was *omnia præbete,* 2049
 And that plesed hire herte;
 For that lyne was no lenger
 At the leves ende.

Hadde she loked that oother half,
 And the leef torned,
 She sholde have founden fele wordes
 Folwynge therafter,
Quod bonum est tenete;
 Truthe that text made.
 And so ferde ye, madame,
 Ye kouthe na-moore fynde, 2060

Tho ye loked on Sapience 2061
Sittyng in youre studie.
This text that ye han told
Were good for lordes ;
Ac yow fayled a konnyng clerk
That kouthe the leef han torned.
And if ye seche Sapience eft,
Fynde shul ye that folweth,
A ful teneful text
To hem that taketh mede ;
And that is *animam autem aufert*
 accipientium, etc., 2072
And that is the tail of the text ;
Of that that she shewed,
That theigh we wyne worshipe,
And with mede have victorie,
The soule that the sonde taketh
By so muche is bounde." 2078





*Passus Quartus de Visione, ut
supra.*

“CESSETH,” seith the kyng,
 “I suffre yow no lenger;
 Ye shul saughtne for sothe,
 And serve me bothe.
 Kis hire,” quod the kyng,
 “Conscience, I hote.” [science,
 “Nay, by Crist!” quod Con-
 “Congeye me er for evere,
 But Reson rede me therto,
 Rather wol I deye.” [the kyng
 “And I comaunde thee,” quod
 To Conscience thanne,
 “Rape thee to ryde, 2091
 And Reson thow fecche;
 Comaunde hym that he come
 My counseil to here,
 For he shal rule my reaume
 And rede me the beste,
 And acounte with thee, Conscience,
 So me Crist helpe!
 How thow lernest the peple,
 The lered and the lewed.”
 “I am fayn of that foreward,”
 Seide the freke thanne, 2102

And ryt right to Reson, 2103
And rouneth in his ere,
And seide as the kyng bad,
And sithen took his leve.

“I shal arraye me to ryde,” quod
“Reste thee a while.” [Reson,
And called Caton his knave,
Curteis of speche,
And also Tomme Trewe-tonge,—
“Tel me no tales,
Ne lesynge to laughen of ;
For I loved hem nevere ; 2114
And set my sadel upon Suffre,
Til I se my tyme,
And lat warroke hym wel
With witty-wordes gerthes,
And hange on hym the hevy bry-
To holde his heed lowe, [del
For he wol make ‘wehee !’
Twies er he be there.”

Thanne Conscience upon his
Carieth forth faste, [capul
And Reson with hym ryt, 2125
Rownyng togideres,
Whiche maistries Mede
Maketh on this erthe.

Oon Waryn Wisdom,
And Witty his feere,
Folwed hym faste,
For thei hadde to doone [rye,
In th’escheker and in the chaunce-
To ben discharged of thynges ;
And riden faste, for Reson sholde
Rede hem the beste, 2136

For to save hem for silver 2137

From shame and from harmes.

And Conscience knew hem wel,

Thei loved coveitise ;

And bad Reson ryde faste,

And recche of hir neither.

“ Ther are wiles in hire wordes,

And with Mede thei dwelleth ;

Ther as wrathe and wranglynge is,

Ther wyne thei silver ;

Ac where is love and leautee,

Thei wol noght come there. 2148

Contritio et infelicitas in viis eorum,
etc.

“ Thei ne yeveth noght of God

One goose wynges.

Non est timor Dei ante oculos
eorum, etc.

“ For woot God thei wolde do

For a dozeyne chicknes, [moore

Or as manye capons,

Or for a seem of otes,

Than for the love of oure Lord, 2159

Or alle hise leewe seintes.

For-thi Reson lat hem ride,

Tho riche by hymselfe,

For Conscience knoweth hem noght,

Ne Crist, as I trowe.”

And thanne Reson rood faste

The righte heighe gate,

As Conscience hym kenned,

Til thei come to the kynges.

Curteisly the kyng thanne

Com ayeins Reson, 2170

And bitwene hymself and his sone
Sette hym on benche ;
And wordeden wel wisely
A gret while togideres :

And thanne com Pees into par-
And putte forth a bille, [lement,
How Wrong ayeins his wille
Hadde his wif taken,
And how he ravysshede Rose
Reignaldes loove,
And Margrete of hir maydenhede
Maugree hire chekes. 2182

“ Bothe my gees and my grys
Hise gadelynges feccheth,
I dar noght for fere of hem
Fighte ne chide.

He borwed of me Bayard,
He broughte hym hom nevere,
Ne no ferthyng therfore,
For ought I koude plede.
He maynteneth hise men,
To murthere myne hewen,
Forstalleth my feires, 2193
And fighteth in my chepyng,
And breketh up my bernes dore,
And bereth away my whete,
And taketh me but a taillé
For ten quarters of otes ;
And yet he beteth me therto,
And lyth by my mayde.
I am noght hardy for hym
Unnethe to loke.”

The kyng knew he seide sooth,
For Conscience hym tolde 2204

That Wrong was a wikked lust, 2205
And wroghte muche sorwe.

Wrong was afered thanne,
And Wisdom he soughte,
To maken pees with hise pens;
And profred hym manye,
And seide, "Hadde I love of my lord
Litel wolde I recche, [the kyng,
Theigh Pees and his power
Pleynd hym evere."

Tho wente Wisdom
And sire Waryn the Witty, 2216
For that Wrong hadde y-wroght
So wikked a dede,
And warnede Wrong tho
With swich a wis tale,
"Who so wercheth by wille,
Wrathe maketh ofte;
I sey it by myself,
Thow shalt it wel fynde;
But if Mede it make,
Thi meschief is uppe,
For bothe thi lif and thi lond 2227
Lyth in his grace."

Thanne wowede Wrong
Wisdom ful yerne,
To maken pees with his pens,
Handy dandy payed.

Wisdom and Wit thanne
Wenten togidres,
And token Mede myd hem
Mercy to wyne.

Pees putte forth his heed,
And his panne bloody, 2238

“ Withouten gilt, God it woot, 2239
 Gat I this scathe ;
 Conscience and the commune
 Knowen the sothe.”

Ac Wisdom and Wit
 Were aboute faste,
 To overcomen the kyng
 With catel, if thei myghte.

The kyng swor by Crist,
 And by his crowne bothe,
 That Wrong for hise werkes
 Sholde wo tholie ; 2250
 And comaundede a constable
 To casten hym in irens,
 And lete hym noght thise seven yer
 Seen his feet ones.

“ God woot,” quod Wisdom,
 “ That were noght the beste ;
 And he amendes nowe make,
 Lat maynprise hym have,
 And be borch for his bale,
 And buggen hym boote,
 And so amenden that is mys-do 2261
 And evere moore the bettre.”

Wit acorded therwith,
 And seide the same,
 “ Bettre is that boote
 Bale a-doun brynge,
 Than bale be y-bet,
 And boote never the bettre.”

And thanne gan Mede to mengen
 And mercy she bi-soughte, [hire,
 And profrede Pees a present
 Al of pure golde : 2272

“ Have this, man, of me,” quod she,
 “ To amenden thi scathe,
 For I wol wage for Wrong
 He wol do so na-moore.”

Pitously Pees thanne
 Preyde to the kyng,
 To have mercy on that man
 That mys-dide hym so ofte ;
 “ For he hath waged me wel,
 As Wisdom hym taughte,
 And I forgyve hym that gilt
 With a good wille, 2284
 So that the kyng assente,
 I kan seye no bettre ;
 For Mede hath me amendes maad,
 I may na-moore axe.”

“ Nay,” quod the kyng tho,
 “ So me Crist helpe !
 Wrong wendeth noght so a-wey,
 Erst wole I wite moore.
 For lope he so lightly,
 Laughen he wolde ;
 And eft the boldere be 2295
 To bete myne hewen ;
 But Reson have ruthe on hym,
 He shal reste in my stokkes ;
 And that as longe as he lyveth,
 But lownesse hym borwe.”

Som men radde Reson tho
 To have ruthe on that shrewe,
 And for to counseille the kyng,
 And Conscience after ;
 That Mede moste be maynpernour
 Reson thei bi-soughte. 2306

“ Reed me noght,” quod Reson,
“ No ruthe to have,
Til lordes and ladies
Loven alle truthe,
And haten all harlotrie,
To heren or to mouthen it.

“ Til Parnelles purfill
Be put in hire hucche,
And childrene cherissynge
Be chastynge with yerdes,
And harlottes holynesse
Be holden for an hyne. 2318

“ Til clerkene coveitise be
To clothe the povere and fede,
And religiouse romeris
Recordare in hir cloistres,
As seynt Beneyt hem bad,
Bernard and Fraunceis,
And til prechours prechyng
Be preved on hemselfe.

“ Til the kynges counseil
Be the commune profit,
Til bisshopes bayardes 2329
Ben beggeris chaumbres,
Hire haukes and hire houndes
Help to povere religious.

“ And til seint James be sought
There I shal assigne,
That no man go to Galis
But if he go for evere ;—
And alle Rome renneres,
For robberes biyonde,
Bere no silver over see
That signe of kyng sheweth, 2340

Neither grave ne ungrave, 2341
 Gold neither silver,
 Upon forfeiture of that fee,
 Who so fynt it at Dover,
 But if he be marchaunt or his man,
 Or messenger with lettres,
 Provysour or preest,
 Or penaunt for hise synnes.

“And yet,” quod Reson, “by the
 I shal no ruthe have, [Rode!
 While Mede hath the maistrie
 In this moot-halle. 2352

Ac I may shewe ensamples,
 As I se outhur while,
 I seye it by myself,” quod he,
 “And it so were
 That I were kyng with coroune
 To kepen a reaume,
 Sholde nevere Wrong in this world,
 That I wite myghte,
 Ben unpunysshed in my power,
 For peril of my soule,
 Ne gete my grace for giftes, 2363
 So me God save!
 Ne for no mede have mercy,
 But mekenesse it make;
 For *nullum malum* the man
 Mette with *inpunitum*,
 And bad *nullum bonum*
 Be *irremuneratum*.

“Lat youre confessour, sire kyng,
 Construe this unglosed;
 And if ye werchen it in werk,
 I wedde myne eris, 2374

That lawe shal ben a laborer 2375
 And lede a-feld donge,
 And love shal lede thi lond,
 As the leef liketh."

Clerkes that were confessours
 Coupled hem togideres,
 Al to construe this clause,
 And for the kynges profit,
 Ac noght for confort of the com-
 Ne for the kynges soule ; [mune,
 For I seigh Mede in the moot-halle
 On men of lawe wynke, 2386
 And thei laughynge lope to hire,
 And left Reson manye.

Waryn Wisdom
 Wynked upon Mede,
 And seide, " Madame, I am youre
 What so my mouth jangle ; [man,
 I falle in floryns," quod that freke,
 " And faile speche ofte."

Alle rightfulle recordede
 That Reson truthe tolde ;
 And Wit acorded therwith, 2397
 And comendede hise wordes,
 And the mooste peple in the halle,
 And manye of the grete,
 And leten Mekenesse a maister,
 And Mede a mansed sherewe.

Love leet of hire light,
 And leauté yet lasse,
 And seiden it so heighe
 That al the halle it herde,
 " Who so wilneth hire to wif,
 For welthe of hire goodes, 2408

But he be knowe for a cokewold,
Kut of my nose."

Mede mornede tho,
And made hevy chere,
For the mooste commune of that
Called hire an hore. [court
Ac a sisour and a somonour
Sued hire faste,
And a sherreves clerk
Bisherewed at the route ;
" For ofte have I," quod he,
" Holpen yow at the barre, 2420
And yet yeve ye me nevere
The worth of a risshe."

The kyng callede Conscience,
And afterward Reson,
And recordede that Reson
Hadde rightfully shewed ;
And modiliche upon Mede
With myght the kyng loked ;
And gan wexe wroth with lawe,
For Mede almoost hadde shent it ;
And seide, " thorough lawe, as I
I lese manye eschetes ; [leve !
Mede overmaistreth lawe,
And mucche truthe letteth.
Ac Reson shal rekene with yow,
If I regne any while,
And deme yow bi this day,
As ye han deserved.
Mede shal noght maynprise yow,
By the Marie of hevene !
I wole have leauté in lawe,
And lete be al youre janglyng ; 2442

And as moost folk witnesseth wel,
Wrong shal be demed."

Quod Conscience to the kyng,
" But the commune wole assente,
It is ful hard, by myn heed !
Hertoo to brynge it,
Alle youre lige leodes
To lede thus evene." [rode!"]

" By hym that raughte on the
Quod Reson to the kyng,
" But if I rule thus youre reaume,
Rende out my guttes, 2454
If ye bidden buxomnesse
Be of myn assent."

" And I assente," seith the kyng,
" By seinte Marie my lady !
By my counseil commune,
Of clerkes and of erles ;
Ac redily, Reson,
Thow shalt noght ride fro me,
For, as longe as I lyve,
Lete thee I nelle."

" I am al redy," quod Reson,
" To reste with yow evere ;
So Conscience be of oure counseil,
I kepe no bettre."

" And I graunte," quod the kyng,
" Goddes forbode ellis !
Als longe as oure lyf lasteth,
Lyve we togideres." 2472



*Passus Quintus de Visione, ut
supra.*

THE kyng and hise knyghtes
To the kirke wente,
To here matyns of the day
And the masse after.
Thanne waked I of my wynkyng,
And wo was withalle,
That I ne hadde slept sadder,
And y-seighen moore.
Ac er I hadde faren a furlong,
Feyntise me hente,
That I ne myghte ferther a foot
For defaute of slepyng,
And sat softely a-doun, 2485
And seide my bileve,
And so I bablede on my bedes,
Thei brougte me a-slepe.
And thanne saugh I mucche moore
Than I bifore of tolde,
For I seigh the feld ful of folk,
That I bifore of seide,
And how Reson gan arayen hym
Al the reaume to preche,
And with a cros afore the kyng
Comsede thus to techen. 2496

He preved that thise pestilences
Were for pure synne,
And the south-westrene wynd
On Saterdag at even
Was pertliche for pure pride,
And for no point ellis :
Pyries and plum-trees
Were puffed to the erthe,
In ensauple that the segges
Sholden do the bettre ;
Beches and brode okes
Were blowen to the grounde, 2508
Turned upward hire tailes,
In tokenynge of drede
That dedly synne er domes-day
Shal for-doon hem alle.

Of this matere I myghte
Mamelen ful longe ;
Ac I shal seye as I saugh,
So me God helpe !
How pertly afore the peple
Reson bigan to preche.

He bad Wastour go werche, 2519
What he best kouthe,
And wynnen his wastyng
With som maner crafte.

He preide Pernele
Hir purfil to lete,
And kepe it in hire cofre
For catel at hire nede.

Tomme Stowne he taughte
To take two staves,
And fecche Felice hom
Fro the wynen pyne. 2530

He warnede Watte 2531
 His wif was to blame,
 For hire heed was worth half marc,
 And his hood noght worth a grote;
 And bad Bette kutte
 A bough outhur tweye,
 And bete Beton therwith,
 But if she wolde werche.

And thanne he chargede chapmen
 To chastizen hir children,
 Late no wynnyng hem forwanye
 While thei be yonge, 2542
 Ne for no poustee of pestilence
 Plese hem noght out of reson.
 " My sire seide so to me,
 And so dide my dame,
 That the levere child
 The moore loore bihoveth;
 And Salomon seide the same,
 That *Sapience* made,
Qui parcit virgæ, odit filium.
 " The Englissh of this Latyn is,
 Who so wole it knowe, 2553
 Who so spareth the spring,
 Spilleth hise children."

And sithen he prechede prelates
 And preestes togideres,
 " That ye prechen to the peple,
 Preve it on yowselve,
 And dooth it in dede,
 It shal drawe yow to goode;
 If ye leven as ye leren us,
 We shul leve yow the bettre."

And sithen he radde Religion 2564

Hir rule to holde ; 2565
“ Lest the kyng and his conseil
Youre comunes apeire,
And be stywardes of youre stedes,
Til ye be ruled better.”

And sithen he counseiled the kyng
His commune to love ;
“ It is thi trewe tresor,
And tryacle at thy nede.”

And sithen he preide the pope
Have pité on holy chirche,
And er he gyve any grace, 2576
Governe first hymselfe.

“ And ye that han lawes to kepe,
Lat truthe be youre coveitise,
Moore than gold outhur giftes,
If ye wol God plese ;
“ For who so contrarieth truthe,
He telleth in the gospel,
That God knoweth hym noght,
Ne no seynt of hevene.
Amen dico vobis, nescio vos.

“ And ye that seke seynt James,
And seyntes of Rome,
Seketh seynt Truthe,
For he may save yow alle ;
Qui cum patre et filio,
That faire hem bi-falle,
That seweth my sermon.”
And thus seyde Reson.

Thanne ran repentaunce,
And reherced his teme ;
And garte Wille to wepe
Water with hise eighen. 2598

Pernele Proud-herte 2599
 Platte hire to the erthe,
 And lay longe er she loked,
 And "Lord, mercy" cryde,
 And bi-highte to hym
 That us alle made,
 She sholde unsowen hir serk,
 And sette there an heyre,
 To affaiten hire flesshe
 That fiers was to synne.
 "Shal nevere heigh herte me hente,
 But holde I wole me lowe 2610
 And suffre to be mys-seyd,
 And so dide I nevere;
 But now I wole meke me,
 And mercy biseche,
 For al this I have
 Hated in myn herte."

Thanne Lechour seide, "Allas!"
 And on oure Lady he cryde,
 Tomaken mercy for hise mys-dedes
 Bitwene God and his soule;
 With that he sholde the Saterdag,
 Seven yer therafter,
 Drynke but myd the doke,
 And dyne but ones.

Envye with hevy herte
 Asked after shrifte,
 And carefully *mea culpa*
 He comsed to shewe.
 He was as pale as a pelet,
 In the palsy he semed;
 And clothed in a kaurymaury,
 I kouthe it nought discryve, 2632

In kirtel and courtepy, 2633
 And a knyf by his syde ;
 Of a freres frokke
 Were the fore-sleves ;
 And as a leek that hadde y-leye
 Longe in the sonne,
 So loked he with lene chekes
 Lourynge foule.

His body was to-bollen for wrathe,
 That he boot hise lippes ; [fust,
 And wryngynge he yede with the
 To wreke hymself he thoughte 2644
 With werkes or with wordes,
 Whan he seyghe his tyme.
 Ech a word that he warpe
 Was of a neddres tonge ;
 Of chidyng and of chalangynge
 Was his chief liflode,
 With bakbityng and bismere,
 And beryng of fals witenesse.

“I wolde ben y-shryve,” quod this
 “And I for shame dorste ; [sherewe,
 I wolde be gladder, by God ! 2655
 That Gybbe hadde meschaunce,
 Than though I hadde this wouke y-
 A weye of Essex chese. [wonne

“I have a neghebore by me,
 I have anoyed hym ofte,
 And lowen on hym to lordes
 To doon hym lese his silver,
 And maad his frendes be his foon
 Thorugh my false tonge ;
 His grace and his goode happes
 Greven me ful soore. 2666

“ Bitwene manye and manye 2667
I make debate ofte,
That bothe lif and lyme
Is lost thorough my speche.
And whan I mete hym in market
That I moost hate,
I hailse hym hendely,
As I his frend were ;
For he is doughtier than I,
I dar do noon oother ;
Ac hadde I maistrie and myght,
God woot my wille ! 2678

“ And whan I come to the kirk,
And sholde knele to the roode,
And preye for the peple
As the preest techeth,
For pilgrymes and for palmeres,
For al the peple after,
Thanne I crye on my knees
That Crist gyve hem sorwe,
That beren away my bolle
And my broke shete.

“ Awey fro the auter thanne 2689
Turne I myne eighen,
And bi-holde Eleyne
Hath a newe cote ;
I wisshe thanne it were myn,
And al the web after.

“ And of mennes lesynge I laughe,
That liketh myn herte ;
And for hir wynnynge I wepe,
And waille the tyme ;
And deme that thei doon ille,
There I do wel werse. 2700

Who so under-nymeth me herof, 2701
 I hate hym dedly after ;
 I wolde that ech a wight
 Were my knave,
 For who so hath moore than I,
 That angreth me soore.
 And thus I lyve love-lees,
 Lik a luther dogge ;
 That al my body bolneth,
 For bitter of my galle.

“ I myghte noght ete many yeres
 As a man oughthe, 2712
 For envye and yvel wil
 Is yvel to defie.

May no sugre ne swete thyng
 Aswage my swellyng ?
 Ne no *diapenidion*
 Dryve it fro myn herte ?

Ne neither shrifte ne shame,
 But who so shrape my mawe ?”

“ Yis redily,” quod Repentaunce,
 And radde hym to the beste,
 “ Sorwe of synnes 2723
 Is savacion of soules.”

“ I am sory,” quod that segge,
 “ I am but selde oother,
 And that maketh me thus megre,
 For I ne may me venge.

“ Amonges burgeises have I be
 Dwellyng at Londone,
 And gart bakbityng be a brocour
 To blame mennes ware ;
 Whan he solde and I nought,
 Thanne was I redy 2734

Tolye and to loure on my neghebore,
And to lakke his chaffare ;
I wole amende this, if I may,
Thorugh myght of God almyghty."

Now awaketh Wrathe,
With two white eighen ;
And nevelynge with the nose,
And his nekke hangyng.

" I am Wrathe," quod he,
" I was som tyme a frere,
And the coventes gardyner
For to graffen impes ; 2746
On lymitous and listres
Lesynges I ymped,
Til thei beere leves of lowe speche,
Lordes to plese,
And sithen thei blosmede a-brood
In boure to here shriftes ;
And now is fallen therof a fruyt,
That folk han wel levere
Shewen hire shriftes to hem,
Than shryve hem to hir persons.

" And now persons han perceyved
That freres parte with hem,
Thise possessioners preche
And deprave freres.

" And freres fyndeth hem in de-
As folk bereth witnesse, [faute,
That whan thei preche the peple
In many places aboute,
I Wrathe walke with hem,
And wisse hem of my bokes.
Thus thei speken of my spiritualté,
That either despiseth oother, 2768.

Til thei be bothe beggers 2769
And by my spiritualté libben,
Or ellis al riche
And ryden aboute.
I Wrathe reste nevere,
That I ne moste folwe
This wikked folk,
For swich is my grace.

“ I have an aunte to nonne,
And an abbesse bothe ;
Hir hadde levere swowe or swelte,
Than suffre any peyne. 2780

“ I have be cook in hir kichene,
And the covent served
Manye monthes with hem,
And with monkes bothe.
I was the prioresse potager,
And othere povere ladies,
And maad hem joutes of janglyng,
That dame Johane was a bastard,
And dameClarice a knyghtes dough-
Ac a cokewold was hir sire ; [ter,
And Dame Pernele a preestes fyle,
Prioresse worth she nevere,
For she hadde child in chirie-tyme,
Al oure chapitre it wiste.

“ Of wikkede wordes
I Wrathe hire wortes made,
Til ‘thow lixt’ and ‘thow lixt’
Lopen out at ones,
And either hite oother
Under the cheke ;
Hadde thei had knyves, by Crist !
Hir either hadde kild oother. 2802

“ Seint Gregory was a good pope,
 And hadde a good forwit,
 That no prioress were preest,
 For that he ordeyned; [firste day,
 They hadde thanne ben *infames* the
 Thei kan so yvele hele conseil.

“ Among monkes I myghte be,
 Ac many tyme I shonye it;
 For there ben manye felle frekes
 My feeris to asprie,
 Bothe priour and suppriour
 And oure *Pater Abbas*; 2814
 And if I telle any tales,
 Thei taken hem togideres,
 And doon me faste frydayes
 To breed and to watre, [hous,
 And am chalanged in the chapitre
 As I a child were,
 And baleised on the bare ers,
 And no brech bitwene.
 For-thi have I no likyng
 With tho leodes to wonye.
 I ete there unthende fisse, 2825
 And feble ale drynke;
 Ac outhur while whan wyn cometh
 Thanne I drynke wyn at eve,
 And have a flux of a foul mouth
 Wel fyve dayes after.
 Al the wikkednesse that I woot
 By any of oure bretheren,
 I couthe it in oure cloistre,
 That al oure covent woot it.”

“ Nowrepente thee,” quod Repent-
 “ And reherce thow nevere [aunce,

Counseil that thow knowest 2837
By contenaunce ne by right ;
And drynk nat over delicatly,
Ne to depe neither,
That thi wille by cause therof
To wrathe myghte turne.

Esto sobrius," he seide,
And assoiled me after
And bad me wilne to wepe
My wikkednesse to amende.

And thanne cam Coveitise,
Kan I hym naght discryve, 2848
So hungrily and holwe
Sire Hervy hym loked.
He was bitel-browed,
And baber-lipped also,
With two blered eighen
As a blynd hagge ;
And as a letheren purs
Lolled hise chekes,
Wel sidder than his chyn
Thei chyveled for elde ;
And as a bonde-man of his bacon
His berd was bi-draveled,
With an hood on his heed,
A lousy hat above,
And in a tawny tabard
Of twelf wynter age,
Al so torn and baudy,
And ful of lys crepyng,
But if that a lous couthe
Han lopen the bettre, [welthe,
She sholde noght han walked on that
So was it thred-bare. 2870

“ I have ben coveitous,” quod this
 “ I bi-knowe it here, [caytif,
 For som tyme I served
 Symme-atte-Style,
 And was his prentice y-plight
 His profit to wayte.

“ First I lerned to lye,
 A leef outhur tweyne ;
 Wikkedly to weye
 Was my firste lesson ;
 To Wy and to Wynchestre
 I wente to the feyre, 2882
 With many manere marchaundise,
 As my maister me highte.
 Ne hadde the grace of gyle y-go
 Amonges my chaffare,
 It hadde ben unsold this seven yer,
 So me God helpe !

“ Thanne drough I me among dra-
 My donet to lerne, [piers,
 To drawe the liser along,
 The lenger it semed ;
 Among the riche rayes 2893
 I rendred a lesson,
 To broche hem with a pak-nedle,
 And playte hem togideres,
 And putte hem in a presse,
 And pyne hem therinne,
 Til ten yerdes or twelve
 Hadde tolled out thrittene.

“ My wif was a webbe,
 And wollen cloth made ;
 She spak to spynnesteres
 To spynnen it oute, 2904

Ac the pound that she paied by 2905
 Peised a quatron moore
 Than myn owene auncer,
 Who so weyed truthe.

“ I boughte hire barly-malt,
 She brew it to selle,
 Peny ale and puddyng ale
 She poured togideres,
 For laborers and for lowe folk
 That lay by hymselfe.

“ The beste ale lay in my bour,
 Or in my bed-chambre ; 2916
 And who so bummed therof,
 Boughte it therafter,
 A galon for a grote,
 God woot, no lesse !
 And yet it cam in cuppe-mele,
 This craft my wif used.
 Rose the Regrater
 Was hire righte name ;
 She hath holden hukkerye
 Al hire lif tyme.

Ac I swere now, so thee ik ! 2927
 That synne wol I lete,
 And nevere wikkedly weye,
 Ne wikke chaffare use ;
 But wenden to Walsyngham,
 And my wif als,
 And bidde the Roode of Bromholm
 Brynge me out of dette.”

“ Repentedestow evere ? ” quod
 Repentaunce,
 “ Or restitution madest.” [quod he,
 “ Yis, ones I was y-herberwed,”

“ With an heep of chapmen, 2938
I roos whan thei were a-reste
And rifled hire males.”

“ That was no restitution,” quod
Repentaunce,
“ But a robberis thefte ;
Thow haddest be the bettre worthi
Ben hanged therfore,
Than for al that
That thow hast here shewed.”

“ I wende riflynge were restitu-
cion,” quod he, 2947
“ For I lerned nevere rede on boke ;
And I kan no Frensshe, in feith,
But of the ferthestende of North-
folk.” [Repentaunce,

“ Usedestow evere usurie?” quod
“ In al thi lif tyme.”

“ Nay sothly,” he seide,
“ Save in my youthe ;
I lerned among Lumbardes
And Jewes a lesson,
To weye pens with a peis, 2957
And pare the hevyeste,
And lene it for love of the cros,
To legge a wed and lese it.
Swiche dedes I dide write,
If he his day breke,
I have mo manoirs thorough rerages,
Than thorough *miseretur et commo-*

“ I have lent lordes [dat.
And ladies my chaffare,
And ben hire brocour after,
And bought it myselve ; 2968

Eschaunges and chevysaunces 2969
 With swich chaffare I dele,
 And lene folk that lese wole
 A lippe at every noble,
 And with Lumbardes lettres
 I ladde gold to Rome,
 And took it by tale here,
 And tolde hem there lasse."

" Lentestow evere lordes,
 For love of hire mayntenaunce?"

" Ye, I have lent to lordes,
 Loved me nevere after, 2980
 And have y-maad many a knyght
 Bothe mercer and draper,
 That payed nevere for his prentis-
 Noght a peire gloves." [hode

" Hastow pité on povere men,
 That mote nedes borwe?"

" I have as muche pité of povere
 As pedlere hath of cattes, [men,
 That wolde kille hem, if he cacche
 hem myghte,
 For coveitise of hir skynnes." 2990

" Artow manlich among thi
 neghebores

Of thi mete and drynke?"

" I am holden," quod he, " as
 As hound is in kichene, [hende
 Amonges my neghebores, namely,
 Swiche a name ich have."

" Now God lene thee nevere,"
 quod Repentaunce,

" But thow repente the rather,
 The grace on this grounde 2999

Thi good wel to bi-sette, 3000
 Ne thyne heires after thee
 Have joie of that thow wynnest,
 Ne thyne executours wel bi-sette
 The silver that thow hem levest;
 And that was wonne with wrong
 With wikked men be despended.
 For were I frere of that hous
 Ther good feith and charité is,
 I nolde cope us with thi catel,
 Ne oure kirk amende,
 Ne have a peny to my pitaunce, 3011
 So God my soule save!

For the beste book in oure hous,
 Theigh brent gold were the leves,
 And I wiste witterly
 Thow were swich as thow tellest.
Servus es alterius,
Dum fercula pinguia quæris;
Pane tuo potius
Vescere, liber eris.

“Thow art an unkynde creature
 I kan thee noght assoille, 3022
 Til thow make restitucion
 And rekene with hem alle;
 And sithen that Reson rolle it
 In the registre of hevene,
 That thow hast maad ech man good
 I may thee noght assoile.
Non dimittitur peccatum, donec re-
stituatur oblatum.

“For alle that han of thi good,
 Have God my trouthe!
 Ben holden at the heighe doom 3033

To helpe thee to restitue; [sooth,
And who so leveth noght this be
Loke in the Sauter glose,

In *Miserere mei, Deus,*

Wher I mene truthe;

Ecce enim veritatem dilexisti, etc.

Shal nevere werkman in this world

Thryve with that thow wynnest.

Cum sancto sanctus eris :

Construwe me this on Englisshe."

Thanne weex that sherewe in wan-
And wolde han hanged hym; [hope,
Ne hadde repentaunce the rather
Reconforted hym in this manere.

"Have mercy in thi mynde,
And with thi mouth biseche it;

For Goddes mercy is moore
Than alle hise othere werkes.

And al the wikkednesse in this world
That man myghte werche or thynke,
Nis na-moore to the mercy of God,
Than in the see a gleede.

*Omnis iniquitas quantum ad miseri-
cordiam Dei, est quasi scintilla
in medio maris.*

"For-thi have mercy in thy mynde,
And marchaundise leve it;

For thow hast no good ground
To gete thee with a wastel,

But if it were with thi tonge,
Or ellis with thi two hondes.

For the good that thow hast geten
Bigan al with falshede, [with,
And as longe as thow lyvest ther-

Thow yeldest noght, but borwest.

“ And if thow wite nevere to
Ne whom to restitue, [whiche,
Ber it to the bisshope,
And bid hym of his grace
Bi-sette it hymself,
As best is for thi soule ;
For he shal answeere for thee
At the heighe dome,
For thee and for many mo
That man shal yeve a rekenyng,
What he lerned yow in Lente, 3079
Leve thow noon oother,
And what he lente yow of oure Lordes
To lette yow fro synne.” [good

Now bi-gynneth Gloton
For to go to shrifte,
And karieth hym to kirkewarde
His coupe to shewe ;
And Beton the brewestere
Bad hym good morwe,
And asked at hym with that,
Whiderward he wolde. 3090

“ To holy chirche,” quod he,
“ For to here masse,
And sithen I wole be shryven,
And synne na-moore.” [she,

“ I have good ale, gossib,” quod
“ Gloton, woltow assaye?” [he,

“ Hastow ought in thi purs?” quod
“ Any hote spices?”

“ I have pepir and piones,” quod
“ And a pound of garleek, [she,
And a ferthyng-worth of fenel-seed

For fastynge dayes." 3102

Thanne goth Glotin in,
And grete othes after.

Cesse the souteresse
Sat on the benche ;
Watte the warner,
And his wif bothe ;
Tymme the tynkere,
And tweyne of his prentices ;
Hikke the hakeney-man,
And Hughe the nedlere ;
Clarice of Cokkeslane, 3113
And the clerk of the chirche ;
Dawe the dykere,
And a dozeyne othere.

Sire Piers of Pridie,
And Pernele of Flaundres ;
A ribibour, a ratoner,
A rakiere of Chepe,
A ropere, a redyng-kyng,
And Rose the dyssheres ;
Godefray of Garlekhithe,
And Griffyn the Walshe ; 3124
And upholderes an heep,
Erly by the morwe,
Geve Gloton with glad chere
Good ale to hanselle.

Clement the Cobelere
Caste of his cloke,
And at the newe feire
He nempned it to selle.

Hikke the hakeney-man
Hitte his hood after,
And bad Bette the bocher 3135

Ben on his syde. 3136

Ther were chapmen y-chose
This chaffare to preise,
That who so hadde the hood
Sholde han amendes of the cloke.

Two risen up in rape,
And rouned togideres,
And preised thise peny-worthes
A-part by hemselfe;
Thei kouthe noght by hir con-
Acorden in truthe, [science
Til Robyn the ropere 3147
Aroos by the southe,
And nempned hym for a nounpere,
That no debat nere.

Hikke the hostiler
Hadde the cloke,
In covenaut that Clement
Sholde the cuppe fille,
And have Hikkes hood hostiler,
And holden hym y-served.
And who so repented rathest
Sholde aryse after, 3158
And greten sire Gloton
With a galon ale.

There was laughynge and lour-
And "lat go the cuppe;" [ynge,
And seten so til even-song,
And songen umwhile,
Til Gloton hadde y-glubbed
A galon and a gille.
Hise guttes bigonne to gothelen
As two gredy sowes;
He pissed a potel 3169

In a pater-noster while, 3170
And blew his rounde ruwet
At his rugge-bones ende,
That alle that herde that horn
Helde hir noses after,
And wisshed it hadde ben wexed
With a wispe of firses.

He myghte neither steppe ne
Er he his staf hadde ; [stonde,
And thanne gan he to go
Lik a gle-mannes bicche,
Som tyme aside, 3181
And som tyme arere,
As who so leith lynes
For to lacche foweles.

And whan he drough to the dore,
Thanne dymmed hise eighen ;
He stumbled on the thressshfold,
And threw to the erthe.
Clement the cobelere
Kaughte hym by the myddel,
For to liften hym o-lofte ;
And leyde hym on his knowes.
Ac Gloton was a gret cherl,
And a grym in the lifyng,
And koughed up a cawdel
In Clementes lappe ;
Is noon so hungry hound
In Hertford shire
Dorste lape of that levynge,
So un-lovely thei smaughte.

With al the wo of this world,
His wif and his wenche
Baren hym hom to his bed, 3203

And broughte hym therinne ; 3204
 And after al this excesse
 He hadde an accidie,
 That he sleep Saterdag and Sondag,
 Til sonne yede to reste.

Thanne waked he of his wynk-
 And wiped hise eighen ; [yng,
 The firste word that he warpe
 Was “ where is the bolle ? ”
 His wif gan edwyte hym tho,
 How wikkedly he lyvede ;
 And Repentaunce right so 3215
 Rebuked hym that tyme,
 “ As thow with wordes and werkes
 Hast wrought yvele in thi lyve,
 Shryve thee, and be shamed therof,
 And shewe it with thi mouthe.”

“ I Gloton,” quod the grom,
 “ Gilty me yelde, [tonge,
 That I have trespassed with my
 I kan noght telle how ofte ;
 Sworen Goddes soule,
 And so me God helpe ! 3226
 There no nede was,
 Nyne hundred tymes.

“ And over-seyen me at my soper,
 And som tyme at nones,
 That I Gloton girte it up
 Er I hadde gon a myle,
 An y-spilt that myghte be spared
 And spended on som hungry ;
 Over delicatly on fastyng-dayes
 Dronken and eten bothe,
 And sat som tyme so longe there,

That I sleep and eet at ones. 3238
 For love of tales in tavernes
 And for drynke, the moore I dyned;
 And hyed to the mete er noon,
 Whan fastyng-dayes were."

"This shewyng shrift," quod
 Repentaunce,
 "Shal be meryt to the."

And thanne gan Gloton greete,
 And gret doel to make,
 For his luther lif
 That he lyved hadde; 3248
 And avowed to faste,
 "For hunger or for thurste,
 Shal nevere fyssh on Fryday
 Defyen in my wombe,
 Til abstinence myn aunte
 Have gyve me leeve;
 And yet have I hated hire
 Al my lif tyme." [bered,

Thanne cam Sleuthe al bi-sla-
 With two slymy eighen;
 "I moste sitte," seide the segge,
 "Or ellis sholde I nappe.
 I may noght stonde ne stoupe,
 Ne withoute a stool knele;
 Were I brought a-bedde,
 But if my tail-ende it made,
 Sholde no ryngyng do me ryse
 Er I were ripe to dyne."
 He bigan Benedicite with a bolc,
 And his brest knocked,
 And raxed and rored,
 And rutte at the laste. 3270

“ What, awake, renk !” quod Repentaunce,

“ And rape thee to shryfte.”

“ If I sholde deye bi this day,
Me list nought to loke ;
I kan noght parfitly my pater-noster,
As the preest it syngeth ;
But I kan rymes of Robyn Hood,
And Randolf erl of Chestre ; [Lady
Ac neither of oure Lord ne of oure
The leeste that evere was maked.

“ I have maad avowes fourty,
And foryete hem on the morwe ;
I perfournede nevere penaunce
As the preest me highte ;
Ne right sory for my synnes
Yet was I nevere.

And if I bidde any bedes,
But if it be in wrathe,
That I telle with my tonge
Is two myle fro myn herte.
I am ocupied eche day,
Haly-day and oother, 3292
With ydel tales at the ale,
And outhere while at chirche ;
Goddess peyne and his passion
Ful selde thenke I on it.

“ I visited nevere feble men,
Ne fettred folk in puttes ;
I have levere here an harlotrye,
Or a somer game of souters,
Or lesynge to laughen at
And bi-lye my neghebores,
Than al that evere Marc made,

Mathew, Johan, and Lucas. 3304

And vigilies and fastyng-dayes,
 Alle thise late I passe;
 And ligge a-bedde in Lenten,
 And my lemman in myne armes,
 Til matyns and masse be do,
 And thanne go to the freres.
 Come I to *Ite, missa est*,
 I holde me y-served;
 I nam noght shryven som tyme,
 But if siknesse it make,
 Nought twyes in two yer, 3315
 And thanne up gesse I shryve me.

“ I have be preest and parson
 Passynge thritty wynter,
 And yet can I neyther solne ne
 Ne seintes lyves rede; [synge,
 But I kan fynden in a feld,
 Or in a furlang, an hare,
 Better than in *Beatus vir*,
 Or in *Beati omnes*,
 Construe oon clause wel
 And kenne it to my parisshens.
 I kan holde love-dayes,
 And here a reves rekenyng;
 Ac in canon nor in decretals
 I kan noght rede a lyne.

“ If I bigge and borwe aught,
 But if it be y-tailed,
 I foryete it as yerne;
 And if men me it axe
 Sixe sithes or sevene,
 I forsake it with othes;
 And thus tene I trewe men 3337

Ten hundred tymes. 3338

“ And my servauntz som tyme
Hir salarie is bi-hynde ;
Ruthe it is to here the rekenyng,
Whan we shul rede acountes.
So with wikked wil and wrathe
My werkmen I paye.

“ If any man dooth me a bienfait,
Or helpeth me at nede,
I am unkynde ayeins curteisie,
And kan nought understouden it ;
For I have and have had 3349
Som del haukes maneres,
I am noght lured with love, [thombe.
But ther ligge aught under the

“ The kyndenesse that myn even
Kidde me fernyere, [cristene
Sixty sithes I Sleuthe
Have foryete it siththe.

In speche and in sparynge of speche
Y-spilt many a tyme
Bothe flessch and fissh,
And manye othere vitailles, 3360
Both bred and ale,
Buttre, melk, and chese,
For-sleuthe in my service
Til it myghte serve no man.

“ I ran aboute in youthe,
And yaf me naught to lerne,
And evere siththe have I be beggere
For my foule sleuthe.

*Heu michi ! quia sterilem vitam duxi
juvenilem.*” [Repentaunce ;

“ Repentedestow noght ?” quod

And right with that he swowned,
 Til *Vigilate* the veille
 Fette water at hise eighen,
 And flatte it on his face,
 And faste on hym cryde,
 And seide, " Ware thee, for Wan-
 Wolde thee bi-traye, [hope
 ' I am sorry for my synnes'
 Seye to thiselve,
 And beet thiself on the brest,
 And bidde hym of grace ;
 For is ne gilt here so gret 3383
 That his goodnesse nys moore."

Thanne sat Sleuthe up,
 And seyned hym swithe,
 And made a vow to-fore God
 For his foule sleuthe.
 " Shal no Sondag be this seven yer,
 But siknesse it lette,
 That I ne shal do me er day
 To the deere chirche ;
 And here matyns and masse,
 As I a monk were, 3394
 Shal noon ale after mete
 Holde me thennes,
 Til I have even-song herd,
 I bi-hote to the roode !
 And yet wole I yelde ayein,
 If I so much have,
 Al that I wikkedly wan
 Sithen I wit hadde.

" And though my liflode lakke,
 Leten I nelle,
 That ech man ne shal have his,

Er I hennes wende; [menaunt,
 And with the residue and the re-
 Bi the Rode of Chestre!
 I shal seken Truthe erst
 Er I se Rome."

Roberd the robbere
 On *Reddite* loked,
 And for ther was noght wherof,
 He wepte swithe soore;
 Ac yet the synfulle sherewe
 Seide to hymselfe,
 "Crist, that on Calvarie 3417
 Upon the cros deidest,
 Tho Dysmas my brother
 Bi-soughte yow of grace,
 And haddest mercy on that man
 For *memento* sake,
 So rewe on this robbere
 That *reddere* ne have,
 Ne nevere wene to wynne
 With craft that I owe;
 But for thi muchel mercy
 Mitigacion I bi-seche, 3428
 Ne dampne me noght at domes-day
 For that I dide so ille."

What bi-fel of this feloun
 I kan noght faire shewe;
 Wel I woot he wepte faste
 Water with bothe hise eighen,
 And knoweliched his gilt
 To Crist yet eft soones,
 That *Pænetentia* his pik
 He sholde polshe newe,
 And lepe with hym over lond 3439

Al his lif tyme, 3440
 For he hadde leyen by *Latro*
Luciferis aunte. [rute,

And thanne hadde Repentaunce
 And redde hem alle to knele ;
 “For I shal bi-seche for alle synfulle
 Our Saveour of grace,
 To amenden us of oure mysdedes,
 And do mercy to us alle.”

“ Now God,” quod he, “ that of
 thi goodnesse

Bi-gonne the world to make, 3450
 And of naught madest aught, and
 Moost lik to thiselve, [man
 And sithen suffredest for to synne,
 A siknesse to us alle,
 And al for the beste, as I bi-leve,
 What evere the book telleth.

O felix culpa ! O necessarium pec-
catum Ade ! etc.

“ For thorough that synne thi sone
 Sent was to this erthe,
 And bicam man of a maide, 3461
 Mankynde to save :
 And madest thiself with thi sone
 And us synfulle y-liche.

Faciamus hominem ad imaginem
nostram. Et alibi. Qui manet
in caritate, in Deo manet, et
Deus in eo.

“ And siththe with thi selve sone
 In oure secte deidest,
 On Good-Fryday, for mannes sake,
 At ful tyme of the daye, 3472

Ther thiself ne thi sone 3473
 No sorwe in deeth feledest,
 But in oure secte was the sorwe,
 And thi sone it ladde.

Captivam duxit captivitatem.

“ The sonne for sorwe therof
 Lees light of a tyme,
 Aboute mydday whan moost light is,
 And meel-tyme of seintes,
 Feddest with thi fresshe blood
 Oure fore-fadres in derknesse.

*Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris,
 vidit lucem magnam.*

“ And thorough the light that lepe
 Lucifer was blent, [out of thee
 And blewe alle thi blessed
 Into the blisse of paradys.

“ The thridde day after
 Thow yedest in oure sute,
 A synful Marie the seigh,
 Er seynte Marie thi dame ;
 And al to solace synfulle
 Thow suffredest it so were. 3495

Non veni vocare justos, sed peccatores ad pœnitentiam.

“ And al that Marc hath y-maad,
 Mathew, Johan, and Lucas,
 Of thyne doughty dedes
 Was doon in oure armes.

Verbum caro factum est, et habitavit in nobis.

“ And by so mucche me semeth
 The sikerer we mowe
 Bidde and bi-seche, 3506

If it be thi wille, 3507
 That art oure fader and oure brother,
 Be merciabie to us,
 And have ruthe on thise ribaudes
 That repenten hem here soore,
 That evere thei wrathed thee in this
 In word, thought, or dedes." [world,
 Thanne hent Hope an horn
 Of *Deus, tu conversus vivificabis,*
 And blew it with *Beati quorum*
Remissæ sunt iniquitates,
 That alle seintes in hevene 3518
 Songen at ones.

Homines et jumenta salvabis, quem-
admodum multiplicasti miseri-
cordiam tuam.

A thousand of men tho
 Thrungen togideres,
 Cride upward to Crist,
 And to his clene moder,
 To have grace to go with hem
 Truthe to seke.

Ac there was wight noon so wys
 The wey thider kouthe,
 But blustreden forth as beestes
 Over bankes and hilles;
 Til late was and longe
 That thei a leode mette,
 Apparailled as a paynym
 In pilgrymes wise.
 He bar a burdoun y-bounde
 With a brood liste,
 In a withwynde wise
 Y-wounden aboute; 3540

A bolle and a bagge 3541
He bar by his syde,
And hundred of ampulles
On his hat seten,
Signes of Synay,
And shelles of Galice,
And many a crouche on his cloke,
And keyes of Rome,
And the vernycle bi-fore,
For men sholde knowe
And se bi hise signes
Whom he sought hadde. 3552

This folk frayned hym first,
Fro whennes he come.

“ Fram Synay,” he seide,
“ And fram oure Lordes sepulcre ;
In Bethlem and in Babiloyne,
I have ben in bothe ;
In Armonye and Alisaundre,
In manye othere places.
Ye may se by my signes,
That sitten on myn hatte,
That I have walked ful wide 3563
In weet and in drye,
And sought goode seintes
For my soules helthe.”

“ Knowestow aught a corsaint,
That men calle Truthe ?
Koudestow aught wissen us the wey,
Wher that wye dwelleth ?”

“ Nay, so me God helpe !”
Seide the gome thanne,
I seigh nevere palmere,
With pyk ne with scrippe, 3574

Asken after hym er 3575
Til now in this place."

 " Peter," quod a plowman,
And putte forth his hed,
 " I knowe hym as kyndely
As clerk doth hise bokes ;
Conscience and kynde wit
Kenned me to his place,
And diden me suren hym sikerly
To serven hym for evere,
Bothe to sowe and to sette,
The while I swynke myghte. 3586
I have ben his folwere
Al this fifty wynter,
Bothe y-sowen his seed,
And suwed hise beestes,
Withinne and withouten
Waited his profit.
I dyke and I delve,
I do that Truthe hoteth ;
Som tyme I sowe,
And som tyme I thresshe ;
In taillours craft and tynkeris craft,
What Truthe kan devyse,
I weve and I wynde,
And do what Truthe hoteth,
For though I seye it myselfe,
I serve hym to paye ;
I have myn hire wel,
And outhir whiles moore.
He is the presteste paiere
That povere men knoweth ;
He ne withhalt noon hewe his hire,
That he ne hath it at even; 3608

He is as lowe as a lomb, 3609
 And lovelich of speche;
 And if ye wilneth to wite
 Where that he dwelleth,
 I shall wisse you witterly
 The wey to his place."

"Ye, leve Piers," quod thise pil-
 And profred hym huyre, [grimes,
 For to wende with hem
 To Truthes dwellyng-place.

"Nay, by my soules helpe!" quod
 And gan for to swere, [Piers,
 "I nolde fange a ferthyng,
 For seint Thomas shryne;
 Truthe wolde love me the lasse
 A long tyme therafter;
 Ac if yow wilneth to wende wel,
 This is the wey thider.

"Ye moten go thorough Meke-
 Both men and wyves, [nesse,
 Til ye come into Conscience,
 That Crist wite the sothe
 That ye loven oure Lord God 3631
 Levest of alle thynges,
 And thanne youre neghebores next
 In none wise apeire,
 Other wise than thow woldest
 He wroughte to thiselve.

"And so boweth forth by a
 Beth-buxom-of-speche, [brook,
 Til ye fynden a ford,
 Youre-fadres-honoureth,
Honora patrem et matrem, etc.
 Wadeth in that water, 3642

And wasshe yow wel therinne, 3643
 And ye shul lepe the lightloker
 Al youre lif tyme;
 And so shaltow se Swere-noght,-
 But-if-it-be-for-nede,-
 And-nameliche-on-ydel-
 The-name-of-God-almyghty.

“ Thanne shaltow come by a croft,
 But come thow noght therinne;
 That croft hatte Coveite-noght-
 Mennes-catel-ne-hire-wyves,-
 Ne-noon-of-hire-servauntz- 3654
 That-noyen-hem-myghte;
 Loke ye breke no bowes there,
 But if it be youre owene.

“ Two stokkes ther stondeth,
 Ac stynte ye noght there,
 Thei highte Stele-noght and Sle-
 Strik forth by bothe, [noght,
 And leve hem on thi lift half,
 And loke noght thereafter,
 And hold wel thyn hali-day
 Heighe til even. 3665

“ Thanne shaltow blenche at a
 Bere-no-fals-witnesse, [bergh,
 He is frythed in with floryns
 And othere fees manye;
 Loke thow plukke no plaunte there,
 For peril of thi soule;
 Thanne shul ye see Seye-sooth,-
 So-it-be-to-doone,-
 In-good-manere,-ellis-noght-
 For-no-mannes-biddyng.

“ Thanne shaltow come to a court

As cler as the sonne; 3677
 The moot is of Mercy
 The manoir aboute,
 And alle the walles ben of Wit,
 To holden Wil oute,
 And kerneled with Cristendom,
 Mankynde to save,
 Botrased with Bileef-so,-
 Or-thow-beest-noght-saved.

“And alle the houses ben hiled,
 Halles and chambres,
 With no leed but with love, 3688
 And lowe speche as bretheren ;
 The brugg is of Bidde-wel,-
 The-bet-may-thow-spede ;
 Ech piler is of penaunce,
 Of preieres to seyntes ;
 Of almes-dedes are the hokes
 That the gates hangen on.

“Grace hatte the gatewarde,
 A good man for sothe ;
 His man hatte Amende-yow,
 For many men hym knoweth ; 3699
 Telleth hym this tokene,
 That Truthe wite the sothe ;
 ‘I perfourned the penaunce
 That the preest me enjoined,
 And am ful sory for my synnes,
 And so I shal evere,
 Whan I thynke theron,
 Theigh I were a pope.’

“Biddeth Amende-yow meke hym
 Til his maister ones,
 To wayven up the wicket 3710

That the womman shette, 3711
 Tho Adam and Eve
 Eten apples un-rosted.

*Per Evam cunctis clausa est, et per
 Mariam virginem patefacta est.*

“ For he hath the keye and the
 Though the kyng slepe. [cliket,
 And if grace graunte thee
 To go in this wise,
 Thow shalt see in thiselve
 Truthe in thyn herte,
 In a cheyne of charité 3722
 As thow a child were,
 To suffren hym and segge noght
 Ayein thi sires wille.

“ And be war thanne of Wrathe-
 That is a wikked sherewe; [thee,
 He hath envye to hym
 That in thyn herte sitteth,
 And poketh forth pride
 To preise thiselven.
 The boldnesse of thi bienfetes
 Maketh thee blynd thanne; 3733
 And thanne worstow dryven out as
 And the dore closed, [dew,
 Keyed and cliketted,
 To kepe thee withouten;
 Happily an hundred wynter
 Er thow eft entre.
 Thus myghtestow lesen his love,
 To lete wel by thiselve,
 And nevere happily eft entre,
 But grace thow have.

“ And ther are seven sustren

That serven Truthe evere, 3745
And arn porters of the posternes
That to the place longeth.

“That oon hatte Abstinence,
And Humilité another;
Charité and Chastité
Ben hise chief maydenes;
Pacience and Pees
Muche peple thei helpeth;
Largenesse the lady,
She let in ful manye,
Heo hath holpe a thousand out
Of the develes punfolde;
And who is sib to thise sevene,
So me God helpe!
He is wonderly welcome,
And faire underfongen.
And but if ye be sibbe
To some of thise sevene, [Piers,
It is ful hard, by myn heed!” quod
“For any of yow alle
To geten in-going at any gate there,
But grace be the moore.” 3767

“Now by Crist!” quod a kutte-
“I have no kyn there.” [purs,
“Nor I,” quod an ape-ward,
“By aught that I kan knowe.”
“Wite God!” quod a wafrestere,
“Wiste I this for sothe,
Sholde I nevere ferther a foot,
For no freres prechyng.”

“Yis,” quod Piers the Plowman,
And poked hem alle to goode,
“Mercy is a maiden there 3778

Hath myght over alle ; 3779
And she is sib to alle synfulle,
And hire sone also,
And thorough the help of hem two
Hope thow noon oother,
Thow myght gete grace there,
So thow go bi-tyme." [doner,
" Bi Seint Poul !" quod a par-
" Peraventure I be noght knowe
there ; [brevettes,
I wol go fecche my box with my
And a bulle with bisshopes lettres."
" By Crist !" quod a commune
womman,
" Thi compaignie wol I folwe ;
Thow shalt seye I am thi suster,
I ne woot where thei bcome." 3793





*Passus Sextus de Visione, ut
supra.*

“ **T**HIS were a wikkede wey,
But who so hadde a gyde,
That wolde folwen us ech a foot ;”
Thus this folke hem mened.

Quod Perkyn the Plowman,
“ By Seint Peter of Rome !
I have an half acre to erie
By the heighe weye ;
Hadde I erylled this half acre,
And sowen it after,
I wolde wende with yow,
And the wey teche.” 3805

“ This were a long lettyng,”
Quod a lady in scleyre,
“ What sholde we wommen
Werche the while ?” [Piers,

“ Sommeshul sowe the sak,” quod
“ For shedyng of the whete ;
And ye lovely ladies,
With youre longe fynGRES,
That ye have silk and sandel
To sowe, whan tyme is.
Chesibles for chapeleyns
Chirches to honoure. 3817

“Wyves and widewes, 3818
 Wolle and flex spynneth;
 Maketh cloth, I counseille yow,
 And kenneth so youre doughtres;
 The nedy and the naked,
 Nymeth hede how thei liggeth,
 And casteth hem clothes,
 For so comaundeth Truthe.
 For I shal leven hem liflode,
 But if the lond faille,
 Flesshe and breed bothe
 To riche and to poore, 3829
 As long as I lyve,
 For the Lordes love of hevene;
 And alle manere of men [beth,
 That thorough mete and drynke lib-
 Helpeth hym to werche wightliche,
 That wynneth youre foode.”

“By Crist!” quod a knyght thoo,
 “He kenneth us the beste;
 Ac on the teme, trewely,
 Taught was I nevere; 3840
 But kenne me,” quod the knyght,
 “And by Crist I wole assaye!”

“By Seint Poul!” quod Perkyn,
 “Ye profre yow so faire,
 That I shal swynke and swete,
 And sowe for us bothe,
 And othere labours do for thi love
 Al my lif tyme,
 In coveNaunt that thou kepe
 Holy kirke and myselve
 Fro wastours and fro wikked men
 That this world destruyeth. 3851

And go hunte hardiliche 3852
 To hares and to foxes,
 To bores and to brokkes
 That breken doun myne hegges;
 And so affaite thi faucons
 Wilde foweles to kille;
 For swiche cometh to my croft,
 And croppeth my whete."

Curteisly the knyght thanne
 Comsed thise wordes;
 "By my power, Piers!" quod he,
 "I plighte thee my trouthe, 3863
 To fulfille this forwarde,
 Though I fighte sholde;
 Als longe as I lyve
 I shal thee mayntene."

"Ye, and yet a point," quod
 "I preye yow of moore, [Piers,
 Loke ye tene no tenaunt,
 But Truthe wole assente;
 And though ye mowe amercy hem,
 Lat mercy be taxour,
 And mekenesse thi maister, 3874
 Maugree Medes chekes.

And though povere men profre yow
 Presentes and giftes,
 Nyme it noght, an aventure
 Ye mowe it noght deserve;
 For thow shalt yelde it ayein
 At one yeres tyme,
 In a ful perilous place,
 Purgatorie it hatte. [men,

"And mys-bede noght thi bonde-
 The bettre may thow spede; 3885

Though he be thyn underlying here,
 Wel may happe in hevene
 That he worth worthier set,
 And with moore blisse.

Amice, ascende superius.

For in charnel at chirche
 Charles ben yvel to knowe,
 Or a knyght from a knave there,
 Knowe this in thyn herte.
 And that thou be trewe of thi tonge,
 And tales that thou hatie,
 But if thei ben of wisdom or of wit
 Thi werkmen to chaste.

Hold with none harlotes,
 Ne here noght hir tales,
 And namely at the mete
 Swiche men eschuwe;
 For it ben the develes disours,
 I do the to understonde."

" I assente, by Seint Jame !"

Seide the knyght thanne,
 " For to werche by thi wordes
 The while my lif dureth." 3908

" And I shal apparaille me," quod

" In pilgrymes wise, [Perkyn,

And wende with yow I wile,

Til we fynde Truthe;

And caste on my clothes

Y-clouted and hole,

My cokeres and my coffes,

For cold of my nailes;

And hange myn hopper at myn hals

In stede of a scryppe.

A busshel of bred corn 3919

Brynge me therinne ; 3920
 For I wol sowe it myself,
 And sithenes wol I wende
 To pilgrymage, as palmeres doon,
 Pardon for to have.

And who so helpeth me to erie
 And sown here er I wende,
 Shal have leve, by oure Lorde!
 To lese here in hervest,
 And make hem murie thermyd,
 Maugree who so bi-gruccheth it.
 And alle kynne crafty-men, 3931
 That konne lyven in truthe,
 I shal fynden hem fode,
 That feithfulliche libbeth.

“ Save Jagge the jogelour,
 And Jonette of the stuwes,
 And Danyel the dees pleyere,
 And Denote the baude,
 And frere the faitour,
 And folk of hire ordre,
 And Robyn the ribaudour
 For hise rusty wordes. 3942
 Truthe tolde me ones,
 And bad me telle it after,
Deleantur de libro viventium,
 I sholde noght dele with hem,
 For holy chirche is hote of hem
 No tithe to take ;
Qui cum justis non scribantur ;
 They ben ascaped good aventure,
 God hem amende !”

Dame Werch-whan-tyme-is
 Piers wif highte ; 3953

His doughter highte Do-right-so,-
 Or-thi-dame-shal-thee-bete ;
 His sone highte Suffre-thi-sove-
 To-haven-hir-wille,- [reyns-
 Deme-hem-noght,-for-if-thow-doost,
 Thow-shalt-it-deere-abugge.
 Lat God y-worthe with al,
 For so his word techeth ;
 For now I am old and hoor,
 And have of myn owene,
 To penaunce and to pilgrimage
 I wol passe with thise othere. 3965

“ For-thi I wole er I wende,
 Do write my biqueste,
In Dei nomine, Amen,
 I make it myselve ;
 He shal have my soule,
 That best hath deserved it ;
 And fro the fend it defende,
 For so I bileve,
 Til I come to hise acountes,
 As my Credo me telleth,
 To have a relees and a remission,
 On that rental I leve.

“ The kirkes hal have my caroyne,
 And kepe my bones ;
 For of my corn and catel
 She craved the tithe :
 I paide it ful prestly,
 For peril of my soule ;
 For-thi is he holden I hope
 To have me in his masse,
 And mengen in his memorie
 Amonges alle cristene. 3987

“ My wif shal have of that I wan
 With truthe, and na-moore.
 And dele among my doughtres,
 And my deere children ;
 For though I deye to day,
 My dettes are quyte ;
 I bar hom that I borwed,
 Er I to bedde yede. [remenaunt,
 “ And with the residue and the
 By the Rode of Lukes !
 I wol worshipe therwith
 Truthe by my lyve, 3999
 And ben his pilgrym atte plow,
 For povere mennes sake.
 My plow-foot shal be my pikstaf,
 And picche a-two the rotes,
 And helpe my cultour to kerve
 And clense the furwes.”

Now is Perkyn and hise pilgrimes
 To the plow faren ;
 To erie his half acre
 Holpen hym manye ;
 Dikeres and delveres 4010
 Digged up the balkes.
 Therwith was Perkyn a-payd,
 And preised hem faste.

Othere werkmen ther were
 That wroghten ful yerne ;
 Ech man in his manere
 Made hymself to doone,
 And somme to plesse Perkyn
 Piked up the wedes.

At heigh prime Piers
 Leet the plowgh stonde, 4021

To over-sen hem hymself, 4022
 And who so best wroghte
 He sholde be hired therafter,
 Whan hervest tyme come.

And thanne seten somme,
 And songen atte nale,
 And holpen ere this half acre
 With "How, trolly lolly."

"Now, by the peril of my soule!"
 Al in pure tene, [quod Piers,
 "But ye arise the rather
 And rape yow to werche, 4033
 Shal no greyn that groweth
 Glade yow at nede,
 And though ye deye for doel,
 The devel have that reccheth."

Tho were faitours a-fered,
 And feyned hem blynde;
 Somme leide hir legges a-liry,
 As swiche losels konneth,
 And made hir mone to Piers,
 And preide hym of grace;
 "For we have no lymes to laboure
 Lord, y-graced be the; [with,
 Ac we preie for yow, Piers,
 And for youre plowgh bothe,
 That God of his grace
 Your greyn multiplie,
 And yelde yow for youre almesse
 That ye gyve us here;
 For we may noght swynke ne swete,
 Swich siknesse us eyleth."

"If it be sooth," quod Piers, "that
 I shal it soone aspie. [ye seyn,

Ye ben wastours, I woot wel, 4056
 And Truthe woot the sothe ;
 And I am his olde hyne,
 And highte hym to warne,
 Whiche thei were in this world
 Hise werkmen apeired.

Ye wasten that men wynnen
 With travaille and with tene ;
 Ac Truthe shal teche yow
 His teme to dryve,
 Or ye shul eten barly breed,
 And of the broke drynke. 4067

“ But if he be blynd or broke-
 Or bolted with irens, [legged,
 He shal ete whete breed,
 And drynke with myselve,
 Til God of his goodnesse
 Amendement hym sende.

Ac ye myghte travaille, as Truthe
 And take mete and hyre, [wolde,
 To kepe kyen in the feld
 The corn fro the beestes,
 Diken or delven, 4078

Or dyngen upon sheves,
 Or helpe make mortar,
 Or bere muk a-feld.

“ In lecherie and in losengerie
 Ye lyven, and in sleuthe ;
 And al is thorough suffraunce,
 That vengeaunce' yow ne taketh.

“ Ac ances and heremites
 That eten noght but at nones,
 And na-moore er the morwe,
 Myn almesse shul thei have, 4089

And of catel to kepe hem with, 4090
That han cloistres and chirches.

“ Ac Robert Renaboute
Shal noght have of myne,
Ne Postles, but thei preche konne
And have power of the bisshope ;
Thei shul have payn and potage,
And make himself at ese,
For it is an unresonable religion
That hath right noght of certein.”

And thanne gan Wastour to
wrathen hym, 4100
And wolde have y-foughte ;
And to Piers the Plowman
He profrede his glove ;
A Bretoner, a braggere,
A-bosted Piers als,
And bad hym go pissen with his
“ For-pynede sherewe ! [plowgh,
Wiltow or neltow,
We wol have oure wille
Of thi flour and of thi flesshe,
Fecche whanne us liketh ; 4111
And maken us murye thermyde,
Maugree thi chekes.”

Thanne Piers the Plowman
Pleynd hym to the knyghte,
To kepen hym as covenant was
Fro cursede sherewes, [kynnes
And fro thise wastours wolves-
That maketh the world deere ;
“ For tho wasten and wynnen noght,
And that ilke while [peple,
Worth nevere plentee among the

The while my plowgh liggeth." 4123

Curteisly the knyght thanne,
As his kynde wolde,
Warnede wastour,
And wissed hym bettre,
"Or thow shalt abigge by the lawe,
By the ordre that I bere!"

"I was noght wont to werche,"
quod Wastour,

"And now wol I noght bigynne;"
And leet light of the lawe,
And lasse of the knyghte; 4133
And sette Piers at a pese,
And his plowgh bothe;
And manaced Piers and his men,
If thei mette eft soone. [quod Piers,

"Now, by the peril of my soule!"

"I shal apeire yow alle;"
And houped after Hunger,
That herde hym at the firste,
"A-wreke me of thise wastours,"
quod he,

"That this world shendeth." 4143

Hunger in haste thoo
Hente Wastour by the wombe,
And wrong hym so by the wombe,
That bothe hise eighen watrede.

He buffeted the Bretoner
Aboute the chekes,
That he loked lik a lanterne
Al his lif after.

He bette hem so bothe,
He brast ner hire guttes;
Ne hadde Piers with a pese loof. 4154

Preyed Hunger to' cesse, 4155
 They hadde be dolven,
 Ne deme thow noon oother.

“ Suffre hem lyve,” he seide,
 “ And lat hem ete with hogges,
 Or ellis benes or bren
 Y-baken togideres,
 Or ellis melk and mene ale;”
 Thus preied Piers for hem.

Faitours for fere herof
 Flowen into bernas,
 And flapten on with flailes 4166
 Fro morwe til even :
 That Hunger was noght so hardy
 On hem for to loke,
 For a potful of peses
 That Piers hadde y-maked.

An heep of heremytes
 Henten hem spades,
 And kitten hir copes,
 And courtepies hem maked,
 And wente as werkmen
 With spades and with shoveles, 4177
 And dolven and dikeden,
 To dryve away hunger.

Blynde and bed-reden
 Were bootned a thousande,
 That seten to begge silver,
 Soone were thei heeled; *Drawn* :
 For that was bake for bayarde,
 Was boote for many hungry ;
 And many a beggere for benes
 Buxum was to swynke ;
 And eche a povere man wel a-paied

To have pesen for his hyre; 4189
 And what Piers preide hem to do,
 As prest as a sperhawk;
 And therof was Piers proud,
 And putte hem to werke,
 And yaf hem mete as he myghte
 And mesurable hyre. [aforthe,

Thanne had Piers pité,
 And preide Hunger to wende
 Hoom unto his owene yerd,
 And holden hym there;
 "For I am wel a-wroke 4200
 Of wastours, thorough thy myghte.
 Ac I preie thee, er thou passe,"
 Quod Piers to Hunger,
 "Of beggeris and of bidderis
 What best be to doone.
 For I woot wel, be thou went,
 Thei wol werche ful ille;
 For meschief it maketh
 Thei be so meke nouthe,
 And for defaute of hire foode
 This folk is at my wille. 4211

"Thei are my bloody bretheren,"
 quod Piers,
 "For God boughte us alle.
 Truthe taughte me ones
 To loven hem echone;
 And to helpen hem of alle thyng
 Ay as hem nedeth.
 And now wolde I wite of thee
 What were the beste;
 And how I myghte a-maistren hem,
 And make hem to werche." 4221

“ Here now,” quod Hunger, 4222
 “ And hoold it for a wisdom ;
 Bolde beggeris and bigge
 That mowe hir breed bi-swynke,
 With houndes breed and horse breed
 Hoold up hir hertes ;
 A-bate hem with benes,
 For bollynge of hir wombes ;
 And if the gomes grucche,
 Bidde hem go swynke,
 And he shal soupe swetter
 Whan he it hath deserved. 4233

“ And if thow fynde any freke
 That fortune hath apeired,
 Or any manere false men,
 Fonde thow swiche to knowe ;
 Conforte hym with thi catel,
 For Cristes love of hevene ;
 Love hem and leve hem,
 So lawe of God techeth,
Alter alterius onera portare.

“ And alle manere of men
 That thow myght aspie, 4244
 That nedy ben and noughty,
 Help hem with thi goodes ;
 Love hem and lakke hem noght,
 Lat God take the vengeaunce ;
 Theigh thei doon yvele,
 Lat God y-worthe.
Mihi vindictam, et ego retribuam.

“ And if thow wilt be gracious to
 Do as the gospel techeth, [God,
 And bi-love thee amonges lewed
 So shaltow lacche grace ; [men,

Facite vos amicos de Mammone iniquitatis."

[Piers,

"I wolde noght greve God," quod
"For al the good on grounde.

Mighte I synne-lees do as thow
Seide Piers thanne. [seist?"

"Ye, I bi-hote thee," quod Hun-

"Or ellis the Bible lieth; [ger,

Go to Genesis the geaunt,

The engendroure of us alle :

In sudore and swynk

Thow shalt thi mete tilie, 4267

And laboure for thi liflode

And so oure Lorde highte.

And Sapience seith the same,

I seigh it in the Bible,

Piger præ frigore

No feeld nolde tilie, [bidde,

And therfore he shal begge and

And no man bete his hunger.

"Mathew with mannes face

Mouthed thise wordes,

That *servus nequam* hadde a mnam,

And for he wolde noght chaffare,

He hadde maugree of his maister

Evere moore after,

And by-nam hym his mnam,

For he ne wolde werche,

And yaf that mnam to hym

That ten mnames hadde ;

And with that he seide,

That holy chirche it herde,

He that hath shal have

And helpe there it nedeth ; 4289

And he that noght hath shal noght
 And no man hym helpe, [have,
 And that he weneth wel to have
 I wole it hym bi-reve.

Kynde wit wolde
 That ech a wight wroghte,
 Or in dikynge or in delvyng,
 Or travaillynge in preieres;
 Contemplatif lif or actif lif
 Crist wolde thei wroghte.
 The Sauter seith in the Psalme
 Of *Beati omnes*, 4301
 The freke that fedeth hymself
 With his feithful labour,
 He is blessed by the book
 In body and in soule."
Labores manuum tuarum, etc.

"Yet I preie yow," quod Piers,
 "*Par charité*, and ye konne
 Any leef of leche-craft,
 Lere it me, my deere;
 For some of my servauntz,
 And myself bothe, 4312
 Of al a wike werche noght,
 So oure wombe aketh."

"I woot wel," quod Hunger,
 "What siknesse yow eyleth;
 Ye han manged over muche,
 And that maketh yow grone.
 Ac I hote thee," quod Hunger,
 "As thow thyn hele wilnest,
 That thow drynke no day
 Er thow dyne som what.
 Ete noght, I hote thee, 4323

Er hunger thee take, 4324
 And sende thee of his sauce
 To savore with thi lippes ;
 And keep som til soper-tyme,
 And sitte noght to longe,
 And rys up er appetit
 Have eten his fille.
 Lat noght sire Surfet
 Sitten at thi borde.
 Leve hym noght, for he is lecherous,
 And likerous of tunge,
 And after many maner metes 4335
 His mawe is a-fyngred.

“ And if thow diete thee thus,
 I dar legge myne eris,
 That Phisik shal hise furred hodes
 For his fode selle,
 And his cloke of Calabre,
 With alle the knappes of golde,
 And be fayn, by my feith !
 His phisik to lete,
 And lerne to laboure with lond,
 For liflode is swete. 4346
 For murthereris are manye leches,
 Lord hem amende ! [drynkes,
 They do men deye thorough hir
 Er destynnee it wolde.”

“ By seint Poul ! ” quod Piers,
 “ Thise arn profitable wordes !
 Wend now, Hunger, whan thow
 That wel be thow evere ! [wolt,
 For this is a lovely lesson,
 Lord it thee for-yelde ! ”

“ Bi-hote God ! ” quod Hunger,

“ Hennes ne wole I wende, 4358
 Til I have dyned bi this day,
 And y-dronke bothe.”

“ I have no peny,” quod Piers,
 “ Pulettes to bugge,
 Ne neither gees ne grys,
 But two grene cheses,
 A fewe cruddes and creme,
 And an haver cake,
 And two loves of benes and bran
 Y-bake for my fauntes ;
 And yet I seye, by my soule ! 4369
 I have no salt bacon,
 Ne no cokeney, by Crist !
 Coloppes for to maken.

“ Ac I have percile and porettes,
 And manye cole plauntes,
 And ek a cow and a calf,
 And a cart mare
 To drawe a-feld my donge,
 The while the droghte lasteth ;
 And by this liflode we mote lyve
 Til Lammesse tyme. 4380
 And by that, I hope to have
 Hervest in my crofte,
 And thanne may I dighte thi dyner,
 As me deere liketh.”

Al the povere peple tho
 Pescoddes fetten,
 Benes and baken apples
 Thei broghte in hir lappes,
 Chibolles and chervelles,
 And ripe chiries manye,
 And profrede Piers this present 4391

To plese with Hunger. 4392

Al Hunger eet in haste,
 And axed after moore.
 Thanne povere folk, for fere,
 Fedden Hunger yerne,
 With grene poret and pesen,
 To poisone hym thei thoghte.
 By that it neghed neer hervest,
 And newe corn cam to chepyng ;
 Thanne was folk fayn,
 And fedde Hunger with the beste,
 With goode ale, as Gloton taghte,
 And garte Hunger go slepe.

And tho wolde Wastour noght
 But wandren aboute, [werche,
 Ne no beggere ete breed
 That benes inne were,
 But of coket and cler-matyn,
 Or ellis of clene whete ;
 Ne noon halfpeny ale
 In none wise drynke, [neste
 But of the beste and of the brun-
 That in burghe is to selle. 4414

Laborers that have no land
 To lyve on but hire handes,
 Deyned noght to dyne a day
 Nyght-olde wortes ;
 May no peny ale hem paye,
 Ne no pece of bacone,
 But if it be fresshe flessch outhur
 Fryed outhur y-bake, [fisshe,
 And that *chaud* and *plus chaud*,
 For chillynge of hir mawe ;
 And but if he be heighliche hyred ;

Ellis wole he chide, 4456
 And that he was werkman wroght
 Waille the tyme,
 Ayeins Catons counseil
 Comseth he to jangle.
Paupertatis onus patienter ferre me-
mento.

He greveth hym ageyn God,
 And gruccheth ageyn Reson,
 And thanne corseth he the kyng,
 And al his counseil after,
 Swiche lawes to loke 4437
 Laborers to greve.
 Ac whiles Hunger was hir maister,
 Ther wolde noon of hem chide,
 Ne stryven ayeins his statut,
 So sterneliche he loket.

Ac I warne yow, werkmen,
 Wynneth whil ye mowe,
 For Hunger hiderward
 Hasteth hym faste.
 He shal a-wake with water
 Wastours to chaste; 4448
 Er fyve be fulfilled,
 Swich famyn shal a-ryse,
 Thorough flodes and thorough foule
 Fruytes shul faille, [wedres
 And so seide Saturne,
 And sente yow to warne.

Whan ye se the sonne a-mys,
 And two monkes heddes,
 And a mayde have the maistrie,
 And multiplie by eighte,
 Thanne shal deeth with-drawe, 4459

And derthe be justice, 4460
And Dawe the dykere
Deye for hunger ;
But God of his goodnesse
Graunte us a trewe. 4464





*Passus Septimus de Visione, ut
supra.*

TREUTHE herde telle herof,
And to Piers he sente,
To maken his teme
And tilien the erthe,
And purchaced hym a pardone
A pæna et a culpa,
For hym and for hise heires,
For evere moore after,
And bad hym holde hym at home,
And erien hise leyes.
And alle that holpen hym to eryl,
To sette or to sowe,
Or any oother mestier 4477
That myghte Piers availle,
Pardon with Piers Plowman
Truthe hath y-graunted.

Kynges and knyghtes,
That kepen holy chirche,
And rightfully in remes
Rulen the peple,
Han pardon thorough purgatorie
To passen ful lightly,
With patriarkes and prophetes
In paradys to be felawe. 4488

Bysshopes y-blessed, 4489
 If thei ben as thei sholde,
 Legistres of bothe lawes,
 The lewed therwith to preche,
 And in as muche as thei mowe
 Amenden alle synfulle,
 Arn peres with the Apostles,
 This pardon Piers sheweth,
 And at the day of dome
 At the heighe deys sitte.

Marchauntz in the margyne
 Hadde manye yeres, 4500
 Ac noon *a pœna et a culpa*
 The pope nolde hem graunte,
 For thei holde noght hir hali-dayes
 As holy chirche techeth,
 And for thei swere by hir soule,
 And so God moste hem helpe,
 Ayein clene Conscience,
 Hir catel to selle.

Ac under his secret seel
 Truthe sente hem a lettre,
 That thei sholde buggen boldely
 That hem best liked,
 And sithenes selle it ayein,
 And save the wynnynge,
 And amende Meson-Dieux thermyd,
 And mys-eise folk helpe,
 And wikkede weyes
 Wightly amende,
 And do boote to brugges
 That to-broke were,
 Marien maydenes,
 Or maken hem nonnes, 4522

Povere peple and prisons 4523
 Fynden hem hir foode,
 And sette scolers to scole,
 Or to som othere craftes,
 Releve religion,
 And renten hem bettre,
 " And I shal sende yow myselve
 Seint Michel myn archangel,
 That no devel shal yow dere,
 Ne fere yow in youre deying,
 And witen yow fro wanhope,
 If ye wol thus werche, 4534
 And sende youre soules in saufté
 To my seintes in joye."

Thanne were marchauntz murie,
 Many wepten for joye,
 And preiseden Piers the Plowman,
 That purchaced this bulle.

Men of lawe leest pardon hadde,
 That pleteden for mede ;
 For the Sauter saveth hem noght,
 Swiche as take giftes,
 And nameliche of innocentz 4545
 That noon yvel ne konneth.

Super innocentem munera non accipies.

Pledours sholde peynen hem
 To plede for swiche and helpe ;
 Princes and prelates
 Sholde paie for hire travaille.

A regibus et principibus erit merces eorum.

Ac many a justice and jurour
 Wolde for Johan do moore 4556

Than *pro Dei pietate*, 4557
 Leve thow noon oother.

Ac he that spendeth his speche,
 And speketh for the povere
 That is innocent and nedy,
 And no man apeireth,
 Conforteth hym in that caas
 Withouten coveitise of giftes,
 And sheweth lawe for oure Lordes
 As he it hath y-lerned, [love,
 Shal no devel at his deeth day
 Deren hym a myte, 4568
 That he ne worth saaf and his soule,
 The Sauter bereth witnesse :
Domine, quis habitabit in tabernaculo tuo?

Ac to bugge water, ne wynd,
 Ne wit, ne fir the ferthe,
 Thise foure the fader of hevene
 Made to this foold in commune.
 Thise ben Truthes tresores
 Trewe folk to helpe,
 That nevere shul wexe ne wanye,
 Withouten God hymselfe.

Whan thei drawen on to deye,
 And indulgences wolde have,
 Hir pardon is ful petit
 At hir partyng hennes,
 That any mede of mene men
 For hir motyng taketh.
 Ye legistres and lawieres,
 Holdeth this for truthe,
 That if that I lye,
 Mathew is to blame, 4590

For he bad me make yow this, 4591
 And this proverbe me tolde,
*Quodcunque vultis ut faciant vobis
 homines, facite eis.*

Alle libbynge laborers
 That lyven with hir hondes,
 That treweliche taken,
 And treweliche wynnen,
 And lyven in love and in lawe,
 For hir lowe hertes
 Haveth the same absolucion
 That sent was to Piers. 4612

Beggeres ne bidderes
 Ne beth noght in the bulle,
 But if the suggestion be sooth
 That shapeth hem to begge.
 For he that beggeth or bit,
 But if he have nede,
 He is fals with the feend,
 And defraudeth the nedy;
 And also he bi-gileth the gyvere,
 Ageynes his wille;
 For if he wiste he were noght nedy,
 He wolde gyve that another
 That were moore nedy than he,
 So the nedieste sholde be holpe.
 Caton kenneth me thus,
 And the clerc of stories;
Cui des videto,
 Is Catons techyng.

And in the stories he techeth
 To bistowe thyn almesse.
*Sit elemosina tua in manu tua,
 donec studes cui des.* 4624

Ac Gregory was a good man,
 And bad us gyven alle
 That asketh for his love
 That us al leneth.

*Non eligas cui miserearis, ne forte
 prætereas illum qui meretur
 accipere. Quia incertum est
 pro quo Deo magis placeas.*

For wite ye nevere who is worthi,
 Ac God woot who hath nede ;
 In hym that taketh is the trecherie,
 If any treson walke. 4636

For he that yeveth, yeldeth,
 And yarketh hym to reste ;
 And he that biddeth, borweth,
 And bryngeth hymself in dette.
 For beggeres borwen evere mo,
 And hir borgh is God almyghty,
 To yelden hem that yeveth hem,
 And yet usure moore.

*Quare non dedisti pecuniam meam
 ad mensam, ut ego veniam cum
 usuris exigere ?* 4647

For-thi biddeth noght, ye beg-
 But if ye have gret nede ; [geres,
 For who so hath to buggen hym
 The book bereth witnesse, [breed,
 He hath y-nough that hath breed
 y-nough,

Though he have noght ellis.
Satis dives est, qui non indiget pane.

Lat usage be youre solas,
 Of seintes lyves redyng,
 The book banneth beggerie, 4657

And blameth hem in this manere :
*Junior fui, et jam senui, et non vidi
 justum derelictum, nec semen
 ejus, etc.*

For ye lyve in no love,
 Ne no lawe holde ;
 Manye of yow ne wedde noght
 The womman that ye with deele,
 But as wilde bestes with ' wehee !'
 Worthen uppe and werchen,
 And bryngen forth barnes,
 That bastardes men calleth ; 4669
 Or the bak or som boon
 He breketh in his youthe,
 And siththe goon faiten with youre
 For evere moore after. [fauntes
 Ther is moore mys-shapen peple
 Amonges thise beggeres,
 Than of alle manere men
 That on this moolde walketh.
 And thei that lyve thus hir lif,
 Mowe lothe the tyme
 That evere thei were men wroght,
 Whan thei shal hennes fare.
 Ac olde men and hore,
 That help-lees ben of strengthe,
 And wommen with childe
 That werche ne mowe,
 Blynde and bed-reden,
 And broken hire membres,
 That taken thise myschiefs meke-
 As mesels and othere, [liche,
 Han as pleyn pardon
 As the plowman hymselfe. 4691

For love of hir lowe hertes, 4692
 Oure Lord hath hem graunted
 Hir penaunce and hir purgatorie
 Here on this erthe.

“ Piers,” quod a preest thoo,
 “ Thi pardon moste I rede ;
 For I wol construe ech clause,
 And kenne it thee on Englisshe.”

And Piers at his preiere
 The pardon unfoldeth ;
 And I bi-hynde hem bothe
 Biheld al the bulle, 4703
 And in two lynes it lay,
 And noght a leef more,
 And was writen right thus,
 In witnesse of Truthe :
Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam
eternam.

Qui vero mala, in ignem eternum.

“ Peter,” quod the preest thoo,
 “ I kan no pardon fynde,
 But do wel and have wel,
 And God shal have thi soule, 4714
 And do yvel and have yvel,
 Hope thow noon oother,
 But after thi deeth-day
 The devel shal have thi soule.”

And Piers for pure tene
 Pulled it a-tweyne,
 And seide *Si ambulavero in medio*
umbræ mortis, non timebo mala,
quoniam tu mecum es.

“ I shal cessen of my sowyng,”
 quod Piers, 4725

“ And swynke noght so harde, 4726
 Ne aboute my bely joye
 So bisy be na-moore ;
 Of preieres and of penaunce
 My plough shal ben hereafter,
 And wepen whan I sholde slepe,
 Though whete-breed me faille.

“ The prophete his payn eet
 In penaunce and in sorwe,
 By that the Sauter seith,
 So dide othere manye ;
 That loveth God lelly, 4737
 His liflode is ful esy.

*Fuerunt mihi lacrimæ meæ panes
 die ac nocte.*

“ And but if Luc lye,
 He lereth us by foweles,
 We sholde noght be to bisy
 Aboute the worldes blisse ;
Ne solliciti sitis,
 He seith in the Gospel,
 And sheweth us by ensamples
 Us selve to wisse. 4748
 The foweles in the feld,
 Who fynt hem mete at wynter ?
 Have thei no gerner to go to,
 But God fynt hem alle.”

“ What !” quod the preest to
 “ Peter, as me thynketh, [Perkyn,
 Thow art lettred a litel :—
 Who lerned thee on boke ?”

“ Abstynence the abbesse,” quod
 “ Myn a.b.c. me taughte ; [Piers,
 And Conscience cam afterward,
 And kenned me mucche moore.”

“ Were thow a preest,” quod he,
 “ Thou myghtest preche where thou
 As divinour in divinité, [sholdest,
 With *Dixit insipiens* to thi teme.”

“ Lewed lorel !” quod Piers,
 “ Litel lokestow on the Bible ;
 On Salomons sawes
 Selden thow biholdest :
*Ejice derisores et jurgia cum eis, ne
 crescant, etc.*”

The preest and Perkyn
 Opposeden either oother. 4772
 And I thorough hir wordes a-wook,
 And waited aboute,
 And seigh the sonne in the south
 Sitte that tyme,
 Mete-lees and monei-lees,
 On Malverne hulles,
 Musynge on this metels,
 And my wey ich yede.

MANY tyme this metels
 Hath maked me to studie
 Of that I seigh slepynge,
 If it so be myghte,
 And also for Piers the Plowman
 Ful pencif in herte,
 And which a pardon Piers hadde
 Al the peple to conforte,
 And how the preest inpugned it
 With two propre wordes.
 Ac I have no savour in songewarie,
 For I se it ofte faille ;
 Caton and canonistres
 Counseillen us to leve 4794

To sette sadnesse in songewarie,
For *sompnia ne cures*.

Ac for the book Bible
Bereth witnesse
How Daniel divined
The dreem of a kyng,
That was Nabugodonosor
Nempned of clerkes.

Daniel seide, "Sire Kyng,
Thi dremels bitokneth
That unkouth knyghtes shul come
Thi kyngdom to cleyme; 4806
Amonges lower lordes
Thi lond shal be departed."
And as Daniel divined,
In dede it fel after;
The kyng lees his lordshipe,
And lower men it hadde.

And Joseph mette merveillously
How the moone and the sonne
And the ellevene sterres
Hailed hym alle.

Thanne Jacob jugged 4817
Josephes swevene.
"Beau fitz," quod his fader,
"For defaute we shullen,
I myself and my sones,
Seche thee for nede."

It bifel as his fader seide,
In Pharaoes tyme,
That Joseph was justice
Egipte to loke;
It bifel as his fader tolde,
Hise frendes there hym soughte,
And al this maketh me 4829

On this metels to thynke. 4830

And how the preest preved
No pardon to Do-wel,
And demed that Do-wel
Indulgences passed,
Biennals and triennals,
And bisshopes lettres ;
And how Do-wel at the day of dome
Is digneliche underfongen,
And passeth al the pardon
Of Seint Petres cherche.

Now hath the pope power 4841

Pardon to graunte the peple,
Withouten any penaunce
To passen into hevene ;
This is oure bileve,
As lettred men us techeth :

*Quodcumque ligaveris super ter-
ram, erit ligatum et in cælis,
etc.*

And so I leve leelly,
Lordes forbode ellis !
That pardon and penaunce 4852

And preieres doon save
Soules that have synned
Seven sithes dedly :
Ac to truste to thise triennals,
Trewely me thynketh,
Is noght so siker for the soule,
Certes, as is Do-wel.

For-thi I rede yow, renkes,
That riche ben on this erthe,
Upon trust of youre tresor
Triennals to have,
Be ye never the bolder 4864

To breke the .x. hestes ; 4865
And namely ye maistres,
Meires and jugges,
That have the welthe of this world,
And for wise men ben holden,
To purchace yow pardon
And the popes bulles.
At the dredful dome,
Whan dede shulle rise,
And comen alle to-fore Crist
Accountes to yelde ;
How thow laddest thi lif here, 4876
And hise lawes keptest,
And how thow didest day by day
The doom wole reherce.
A poke ful of pardon there,
Ne provincials lettres,
Theigh ye be founde in the frater-
Of alle the foure ordres, [nité
And have indulgences double-fold,
But if Do-wel yow helpe,
I sette youre patentés and youre
At one pies hele. [pardon
For-thi I counseille alle Cristene
To crie God mercy,
And Marie his moder
Be oure meene bitwene,
That God gyve us grace here,
Er we go hennes,
Swiche werkes to werche
While we ben here,
That after oure deeth-day
Do-wel reherce
At the day of dome,
We dide as he highte. 4899



*Passus Octavus de Visione, et
Primus de Do-wel.*

THUS y-robed in russet 4900
I romed aboute

Al a somer seson
For to seke Do-wel ;
And frayned ful ofte
Of folk that I mette,
If any wight wiste
Wher Do-wel was at inne ;
And what man he myghte be
Of many man I asked.

Was nevere wight, as I wente,
That me wisse kouthe 4911

Where this leode lenged,
Lasse ne moore ;
Til it bi-fel on a Friday
Two freres I mette,
Maistres of the menours,
Men of grete witte.
I hailed hem hendely,
As I hadde y-lerned,
And preide hem *par charité*,
Er thei passed ferther,
If thei knewe any contree
Or costes, as thei wente, 4923

"Where that Do-wel dwelleth 4924
Dooth me to witene."

For thei be men of this moolde
That moost wide walken,
And knowen contrees and courtes,
And many kynnes places,
Bothe princes paleises
And povere mennes cotes,
And Do-wel and Do-yvele
Wher thei dwelle bothe.

"Amonges us," quod the Me-
"That man is dwellynge, [nours,
And evere hath, as I hope,
And evere shal hereafter."

"*Contra*," quod I as a clerc,
And comsed to disputen,
And seide hem soothly,

"*Septies in die cadit justus*."

"Sevene sithes, seith the book,
Synneth the rightfulle;
And who so synneth," I seide,
"Dooth yvele, as me thynketh;
And Do-wel and Do-yvele 4946
Mowe noght dwelle togideres.
Ergo he nys noght alwey
Amonges yow freres;
He is outhere while ellis where
To wisse the peple."

"I shal seye thee, my sone,"
Seide the frere thanne,

"How seven sithes the sadde man
On a day synneth:
By a forbisne," quod the frere,
"I shal thee faire shewe. 4957

Lat brynge a man in a boot, 4958
Amydde the brode watre,
The wynd and the water
And the boot waggyng.
Maketh the man many a tyme
To falle and to stonde ;
For stonde he never so stif,
He stumbleth if he meve,
Ac yet is he saaf and sound,
And so hym bihoveth.
For if he ne arise the rather,
And raughte to the steere, 4969
The wynd wolde with the water
The boot over throwe ;
And thanne were his lif lost,
Thorough lachesse of hymselfe.

“ And thus it falleth,” quod the
“ By folk here on erthe ; [frere
The water is likned to the world
That wanyeth and wexeth ;
The goodes of this grounde arn lik
To the grete waves,
That as wyndes and wedres 4980
Walketh aboute ;
The boot is likned to oure body
That brotel is of kynde,
That thorough the fend and the
And the frele worlde [flesshe
Synneth the sadde man
A day seven sithes.

“ Ac dedly synne doth he noght,
For Do-wel hym kepeth ;
And that is charité the champion,
Chief help ayein synne ; 4991

For he strengtheth men to stonde,
 And steereth mannes soule,
 And though the body bowe
 As boot dooth in the watre,
 Ay is thi soule saaf,
 But if thow wole thiselve
 Do a deedly synne,
 And drenche so thi soule,
 God wole suffre wel thi sleuthe,
 If thiself liketh.

For he yaf thee a yeres-gyve,
 To yeme wel thiselve, 5003
 And that is wit and free-wil,
 To every wight a porcion,
 To fleyng foweles,
 To fisshes and to beestes;
 Ac man hath moost therof,
 And moost is to blame,
 But if he werche wel therwith,
 As Do-wel hym techeth." [quod I,
 " I have no kynde knowyng,"
 " To conceyven alle youre wordes;
 Ac if I may lyve and loke, 5014
 I shal go lerne bettere."

" I bikenne thee Crist," quod he,
 " That on cros deyde!"
 And I seide, " The same
 Save yow fro myschaunce,
 And gyve yow grace on this grounde
 Goode men to worthe!"

AND thus I wente wide wher
 Walkyng myn one,
 By a wilde wilderness, 5024

And by a wodes side ; 5025
 Blisse of the briddes
 Broughte me a-slepe,
 And under a lynde upon a launde
 Lened I a stounde,
 To lythe the layes
 Tho lovely foweles made.
 Murthe of hire mouthes
 Made me ther to sleple ;
 The merveillouseste metels
 Mette me thanne
 That ever dremed wight 5036
 In world, as I wene.

A muche man, as me thoughte,
 And lik to myselve,
 Cam and called me
 By my kynde name.

“ What artow ? ” quod I tho,
 “ That thow my name knowest.”

“ That thow woost wel,” quod he,
 “ And no wight bettre.”

“ Woot I what thow art ? ”
 “ Thought,” seide he thanne ; 5047
 “ I have sued thee this seven yeer,
 Seye thow me no rather.”

“ Artow Thought,” quod I thoo,
 “ Thow koudest me wisse,
 Where that Do-wel dwelleth,
 And do me that to knowe.”

“ Do-wel and Do-bet,
 And Do-best the thridde,” quod he,
 “ Arn thre fair vertues,
 And ben noght fer to fynde.
 Who so is trewe of his tunge, 5058

And of his two handes, 5059
 And thorough his labour, or thorough
 His liflode wynneth, [his land,
 And is trusty of his tailende,
 Taketh but his owene,
 And his noght dronklewe ne dedey-
 Do-wel hym folweth. [nous,

“ Do-bet dooth right thus :

Ac he dooth muche moore ;
 He is as lowe as a lomb,
 And lovelich of speche,
 And helpeth alle men 5070
 After that hem nedeth.
 The bagges and the bigirdles,
 He hath to-broke hem alle,
 That the erl Avarous
 Heeld and hise heires.
 And thus with Mammonaes moneie
 He hath maad hym frendes,
 And is ronne to religion,
 And hath rendred the Bible,
 And precheth to the peple
 Seint Poules wordes : 5081

*Libenter suffertis insipientes, cum
 sitis ipsi sapientes.*

“ And suffreth the unwise
 With yow for to libbe ;
 And with glad wille dooth hem
 For so God yow hoteth. [good,

“ Do-best is above bothe,
 And bereth a bisshopes crosse,
 Is hoked on that oon ende
 To halie men fro helle ;
 A pik is on that potente, 5092

To putte a-down the wikked 5093
That waiten any wikkednesse
Do-wel to tene.

And Do-wel and Do-bet
Amonges hem han ordeyned,
To crowne oon to be kyng
To rulen hem bothe ;
That if Do-wel or Do-bet
Dide ayein Do-best,
Thanne shal the kyng come
And casten hem in irens,
And but if Do-best bede for hem,
Thei to be ther for evere.

“ Thus Do-wel and Do-bet,
And Do-best the thridde,
Crouned oon to be kyng
To kepen hem alle,
And to rule the reme
By hire thre wittes,
And noon oother wise,
But as thei thre assented.”

I thonked Thoght tho,
That he me thus taughte. 5115
“ Ac yet savoreth me noght thi
I coveite to lerne [seying ;
How Do-wel, Do-bet, and Do-best
Doon among the peple.”

“ But Wit konne wisse thee,” quod
“ Where tho thre dwelle, [Thoght,
Ellis woot I noon that kan
That now is alyve.”

Thoght and I thus
Thre daies we yeden,
Disputyng upon Do-wel, 5126

Day after oother ; 5127
And er we were war,
With Wit gonne we mete.
He was long and lene,
Lik to noon other ;
Was no pride on his apparaille,
Ne poverte neither ;
Sad of his semblaunt,
And of softe chere.

I dorste meve no matere
To maken hym to jangle,
But as I bad Thoght thoo 5138
Be mene bitwene,
And pute forth som purpos
To preven hise wittes,
What was Do-wel fro Do-bet,
And Do-best from hem bothe.

Thanne Thoght in that tyme
Seide thise wordes :

“ Where Do-wel, Do-bet,
And Do-best ben in londe,
Here is Wil wolde wite,
If Wit koude teche hym ; [man
And wheither he be man or wom-
This man fayn wolde aspie,
And werchen as thei thre wolde,
Thus is his entente.” 5153



*Passus Nonus de Visione, ut supra,
et Primus de Do-bet.*

“SIRE Do-wel dwelleth,” quod
“Noght a day hennes, [Wit,
In a castel that Kynde made
Of foure kynnes thynges ;
Of erthe and of eyr is it maad,
Medled togideres,
With wynd and with water
Witterly enjoyned.

Kynde hath closed therinne
Craftily with alle
A lemman that he loveth

Lik to hymselfe ;

5165

Anima she hatte.

Ac envye hir hateth,
A proud prikere of Fraunce,
Princeps hujus mundi,
And wolde wyne hire away
With wiles, and he myghte.

“Ac Kynde knoweth this wel,
And kepeth hire the bettre,
And dooth hire with sire Do-wel,
Is duc of thise Marches.

“Do-bet is hire Damyselle,
Sire Do-weles doughter,

5177

To serven this lady leelly 5178
Bothe late and rathe.

“Do-best is above bothe,
A bisshopes peere;
That he bit moot be do,
He ruleth hem alle.

Anima, that lady,
Is lad by his leryng.
Ac the constable of that castel,
That kepeth al the wacche,
Is a wis knyght withalle,
Sire Inwit he hatte, 5189

And hath fyve faire sones
Bi his firste wyve;
Sire Se-wel, and Sey-wel,
And Here-wel the hende,
Sire Werch-wel-with-thyn-hand,
A wight man of strengthe,
And sire Godefray Go-wel;
Grete lordes, for sothe.

Thise fyve ben set
To kepe this lady *Anima*,
Til Kynde come or sende 5200
To saven hire for evere.” [quod I,

“What kynnes thyng is Kynde?”
“Kanstow me telle?” [tour

“Kynde,” quod Wit, “is a crea-
Of alle kynnes thynges,
Fader and formour

Of al that evere was maked;
And that is the grete God
That gynnyng hadde nevere,
Lord of lif and of light,
Of lisse and of peyne. 5211

Aungeles and alle thyng 5212
 Arn at his wille ;
 Ac man is hym moost lik
 Of marc and of shafte ;
 For thorough the word that he spak
 Woxen forth beestes.

Dixit et facta sunt.

“ And made man likkest
 To hymself one,
 And Eve of his ryb-bon,
 Withouten any mene,
 For he was synguler hymself ; 5223
 And seide *faciamus*,
 As who seith moore moot herto
 Than my word oone,
 My myght moot helpe
 Forth with my speche.
 Right as a lord sholde make lettres,
 And hym lakked parchemyn,
 Though he koude write never so wel,
 If he hadde no penne,
 The lettre, for al the lordshipe,
 I leve were nevere y-maked. 5234

“ And so it semeth by hym,
 As the Bible telleth,
 There he seide *Dixit et facta sunt*,
 He moste werche with his word,
 And his wit shewe.

And in this manere was man maad,
 Thorough myght of God almighty,
 With his word and werkmanshipe,
 And with lif to laste.

And thus God gaf hym a goost,
 Thorough the godhede of hevene,

And of his grete grace 5246
 Graunted hym blisse,
 And that is lif that ay shal laste
 To al his lynage after.
 And that is the castel that Kynde
Caro it hatte, [made,
 And is as muche to mene
 As man with a soule;
 And that he wroghte with werk,
 And with word bothe,
 Thorgh myght of the magesté
 Man was y-maked. 5257

“ Inwit and alle wittes
 Closed ben therinne,
 For love of the lady *Anima*,
 That lif is y-nempned;
 Over al in mannes body
 He walketh and wandreth,
 And in the herte is hir hoom
 And hir mooste reste.

“ Ac Inwit is in the heed,
 And to the herte he loketh;
 What *Anima* is leef or looth, 5268
 He lat hire at his wille;
 For after the grace of God,
 The gretteste is Inwit.

“ Muche wo worth that man
 That mys-ruleth his Inwit;
 And that ben glotons glubberes,
 Hir God is hire wombe.
Quorum deus venter est.

“ For thei seryen Sathan,
 Hir soules shal he have.
 That lyven synful lif here, 5279

Hir soule is lich the devel ; 5280
And alle that lyven good lif
Are lik to God almyghty.

Qui manet in caritate, in Deo manet, etc.

“ Allas ! that drynke shal for-do
That God deere boughte,
And dooth God forsaken hem
That he shoop to his liknesse.

Amen dico vobis, nescio vos. Et alibi: Et dimisi eos secundum desideria eorum. 5291

“ Fooles that fauten Inwit,
I fynde that holy chirche
Sholde fynden hem that hem fauted,
And fader-lese children,
And widewes that han noght wher-
To wynnen hem hir foode, [with
Madde men and maydenes
That help-lese were,
Alle thise lakken Inwit,
And loore bihoveth.

“ Of this matere I myghte 5302
Make a long tale,
And fynde fele witnesses
Among the foure doctours ;
And that I lye noght of that I lere
Luc bereth wnesse. [thee,

“ God-fadres and god-modres,
That seen hire god-children
At mys-eise and at myschief,
And mowe hem amende,
Shul have penaunce in purgatorie
But thei hem helpe. 5313

For moore bilongeth to the litel
 Er he the lawe knowe, [barn,
 Than nempnyng of a name,
 And he never the wiser.
 Sholde no cristene creature
 Cryen at the yate,
 Ne faille payn ne potage,
 And prelates dide as thei sholden.
 A Jew wolde noght se a Jew
 Go janglyng for defaute,
 For alle the mebles on this moolde,
 And he amende it myghte. 5325

“ Allas ! that a cristene creature
 Shal be unkynde til another ;
 Syn Jewes, that we jugge
 Judas felawes,
 Eyther of hem helpeth oother
 Of that that hem nedeth.
 Whi nel we cristene
 Of Cristes good be as kynde
 As Jewes, that ben oure lores-men ?
 Shame to us alle !
 The commune for hir unkyndenesse,
 I drede me, shul aby.

“ Bisshopes shul be blamed
 For beggeres sake.
 He is wors than Judas,
 That gyveth a japer silver,
 And biddeth the beggere go,
 For his broke clothes.

*Proditor est prælatus cum Juda,
 qui patrimonium Christi mimis
 distribuit. Et alibi: Perni-
 ciosus dispensator est, qui res*

*pauperum Christi inutiliter
consumit.*

“He dooth noght wel that dooth
thus

Ne drat noght God almyghty;
He loveth noght Salomons sawes,
That sapience taughte.

Initium sapientiæ, timor Domini.

“That dredeth God, he dooth
That dredeth hym for love, [wel;
And noght for drede of vengeaunce,
Dooth therfore the bettre.

“He dooth best that with-draweth
By daye and by nyghte, [hym
To spille any speche
Or any space of tyme.

*Qui offendit in uno, in omnibus est
reus.*

“Lesynge of tyme,
Truthe woot the sothe,
Is moost y-hated upon erthe
Of hem that ben in hevene.
And siththe to spille speche, 5369
That spicerie is of grace,
And Goddes gle-man,
And a game of hevene.
Wolde nevere the feithful fader
This fithle were un-tempred,
Ne his gle-man a gedelyng,
A goere to tavernes.

“To alle trewe tidy men
That travaille desiren,
Oure Lord loveth hem and lent
Loude outhur stille 5380

Grace to go to hem, 5381
And of-gon hir liflode.

*Inquirentes autem Dominum non
minuentur omni bono.*

“ Trewe wedded libbynge folk
In this world is Do-wel,
For thei mote werche and wyne,
And the world sustene.
For of hir kynde thei come
That confessours ben nempned,
Knynges and knyghtes,
Kaysers and cherles, 5392
Maidenes and martires,
Out of o man come.
The wif was maad the weye
For to helpe werche ;
And thus was wedlok y-wroght
With a mene persone,
First, by the fadres wille,
And the frendes conseil ;
And sithenes by assent of hemself,
As thei two myghte acorde.
And thus was wedlok y-wroght,
And God hymself it made
In erthe and in hevene,
Hymself bereth witnesse.

“ Ac fals folk feyth-lees,
Theves and lyeres,
Wastours and wrecches,
Out of wedlok, I trowe,
Conceyved ben in yvel tyme,
As Caym was on Eve ;
Of swiche synfulle sherewes
The Sauter maketh mynde : 5414

Concepit in dolore, et peperit iniquitatem, etc.

“ And alle that come of that Caym,
Come to yvel ende.
And God sente to Seem,
And seide by an Aungel,
‘ Thyn issue in thyn issue
I wol that thei be wedded,
And noght thi kynde with Caymes
Y-coupled nor y-spoused.’

“ Yet some, ayein the sonde
Of oure Saveour of hevene, 5426
Caymes kynde and his kynde
Coupled togideres,
Til God wrathed for hir werkes,
And swich a word seide,
‘ That I makede man
It me for-thynketh.’

Pœnitent me fecisse hominem.

“ And com to Noe anon,
And bad hym noght lette ;
‘ Swithe go shape a ship
Of shides and of bords ; 5437
Thyself and thi sones,
And sithen youre wyves,
Busketh yow to that boot,
And bideth ye therinne,
Til fourty daies be fulfild,
That the flood have y-wasshen
Clene away the corsed blood
That Caym hath y-maked.

“ ‘ Beestes that now ben
Shul banne the tyme
That evere that cursed Caym 5448

Coom on this erthe ; 5449

Alle shul deye for hise dedes,

By dales and by hulles,

And the foweles that fleen

Forth with othere beestes,

Excepte oonliche

Of ech kynde a couple,

That in thi shyngled ship

Shul ben y-saved.'

Here a-boughte the barn

The bel-sires giltes,

And alle for hir fadres 5460

Thei ferden the werse ;

The Gospel is her ayein,

In o degré, I fynde :

Filius non portabit iniquitatem patris, et pater non portabit iniquitatem filii, etc.

“ Ac I fynde if the fader

Be fals and a sherewe,

That som del the sone

Shal have the sires tacches.

“ Impe on an ellere, 5471

And if thyn appul be swete,

Muchel merveille me thynketh ;

And moore of a sherewe

That bryngeth forth any barn,

But if he be the same,

And have a savour after the sire :

Selde sestow oother.

*Nunquam colligitur de spinis uva,
nec de tribulis ficus.*

“ And thus thorough cursed Caym

Cam care upon erthe ; 5492

And al for thei wroghte wedlokes
 Ayein Goddes wille.
 For-thi have thei maugré of hir ma-
 That marie so hir children. [riages
 For some, as I se now,
 Sooth for to telle,
 For coveitise of catel
 Un-kyndely ben wedded;
 As careful concepcion
 Cometh of swiche mariages,
 As bi-fel of the folk
 That I bifore of tolde. 5494
 Therfore goode sholde wedde goode,
 Though thei no good hadde;
 ‘I am *via et veritas*,’ seith Crist,
 ‘I may avaunce yow alle.’
 “It is an uncomly couple,
 By Crist! as me thynketh,
 To yeven a yong wenche
 To an old feble,
 Or wedden any wodewe
 For welthe of hir goodes,
 That nevere shal barn bere 5505
 But if it be in hir armes.
 Many a peire, sithen the pestilence,
 Han plight hem togideres,
 The fruyt that brynge forth
 Arn foule wordes,
 In jelousie joye-lees,
 And janglynge on bedde,
 Have thei no children but cheeste,
 And clappyng hem bitwene.
 And though thei do hem to Dun-
 But if the devel helpe, [mowe,

To folwen after the flicche, 5517
 Fecche thei it nevere ;
 And but thei bothe be for-swore,
 That bacon thei tyne.

“ For-thi I counseille alle cristene
 Coveite noght be wedded
 For coveitise of catel,
 Ne of kyn-rede riche ;
 Ac maidenés and maydenés
 Macche yow togideres,
 Wodewes and wideweres
 Wercheth the same ; 5528
 For no londés, but for love,
 Loke ye be wedded,
 And thanne gete ye the grace of God,
 And good y-nough to lyve with.

“ And every maner seculer
 That may noght continue,
 Wisely goo wedde,
 And ware hym fro synne ;
 For lecherie in likyng
 Is lyme-yerd of helle.
 Whiles thow art yong, 5539
 And thi wepene kene,
 Wreke thee with wyvyng,
 If thow wolt ben excused.
Dum sis vir fortis,
Ne des tua robora scortis ;
Scribitur in portis,
Meretrix est janua mortis.

“ Whan ye han wyved, beth war
 And wercheth in tyme ;
 Noght as Adam and Eve,
 Whan Caym was engendred. 5550

For in un-tyme, trewely, 5551
 Bitwene man and womman,
 Ne sholde no bourde or bedde be ;
 But if thei bothe were clene
 Bothe of lif and of soule,
 And in perfit charité,
 That ilke derne dede do
 No man ne sholde.

And if thei leden thus hir lif,
 It liketh God almyghty ;
 For he made wedlok first,
 And hymself it seide : 5562

*Bonum est ut unusquisque uxorem
 suam habeat, propter fornicationem.* [geten

“ And thei that other gates ben
 For gedelynges arn holden,
 As fals folk fondlynges,
 Faitours and lieres,
 Ungracious to gete good
 Or love of the peple,
 Wandren and wasten
 What thei cacche inowe, 5573
 Ayeins Do-wel thei doon yvel,
 And the devel serve ;
 And after hir deeth day
 Shul dwelle with the same,
 But God gyve hem grace here
 Hemself to amende.

“ Do-wel my frend is,
 To doon as lawe techeth ;
 To love thi frend and thi foo,
 Leve me, that is Do-bet ;
 To gyven and to yemen 5584

Bothe yonge and olde, 5585
To helen and to helpen,
Is Do-best of alle.

“ And Do-wel is to drede God,
And Do-bet to suffre,
And so cometh Do-best of bothe,
And bryngeth adoun the mody,
And that is wikked wille
That many a werk shendeth,
And dryveth away Do-wel
Thorough dedliche synnes.” 5595





Passus Decimus de Visione, et Secundus de Do-wel.

THANNE hadde Wit a wif, 5596
Was hote dame Studie,
That lene was of lere,
And of liche bothe ;
She was wonderly wroth
That Wit me thus taughte ;
And al starynge dame Studie
Sterneliche loked. [Wit,
“ Wel artow wis,” quod she to
“ Any wisdomes to telle
To flatereres or to fooles,
That frenetike ben of wittes.” 5607
And blamed hym and banned hym,
And bad hym be stille,
With swiche wise wordes
To wissen any sottes.
And seide, “ *Noli mittere*, man,
Margery perles
Among hogges, that han
Hawes at wille ;
Thei doon but dryvele theron,
Draf were hem levere
Than al the precious perree
That in paradis wexeth. 5619

I seye it by swiche," quod she, 5620
 " That sheweth by hir werkes,
 That hem were levere lond
 And lordshipe on erthe,
 Or richesse, or rentes,
 And reste at hir wille,
 Than alle the sooth sawes
 That Salomon seide evere.

" Wisdom and wit now
 Is noght worth a kerse,
 But if it be carded with coveitise,
 As clotheres kemben hir wolle. 5631
 Who so can contrave deceites
 And conspire wronges,
 And lede forth a love-day
 To lette with truthe,
 He that swiche craftes can
 To counseil is cleped.
 Thei lede lordes with lesynges,
 And bi-lieth Truthe.

" Job the gentile
 In his gestes witnesseth ;
 That wikked men thei welden 5642
 The welthe of this worlde ; [lond,
 And that thei ben lordes of ech a
 That out of lawe libbeth.

*Quare impii vivunt, bene est omni-
 bus qui prevaricantur et inique
 agunt.*

" The Sauter seith the same
 By swiche that doon ille :
*Ecce ipsi peccatores abundantes in
 sæculo obtinuerunt divitias.*

" Lo ! seith holy lettrure, 5653

Whiche beth thise sherewes? 5654
 Thilke that God gyveth moost,
 Leest good thei deleth;
 And moost un-kynde to the com-
 That moost catel weldeth. [mune
*Quæ perfecisti destruxerunt, justus
 autem, etc.*

“ Harlotes for hir harlotrie
 May have of hir goodes,
 And japeris and jogelours,
 And jangleris of gestes.

“ Ac he that hath holy writ 5663
 Ay in his mouthe,
 And kan telle of Tobbye,
 And of twelve apostles,
 Or prechen of the penaunce
 That Pilat wikkedly wroghte
 To Jhesu the gentile,
 That Jewes to-drowe;
 Litel is he loved
 That swich a lesson sheweth,
 Or daunted or drawe forth,
 I do it on God hymselfe. 5676

“ But thoo that feynen hem foolis,
 And with faityng libbeth,
 Ayein the lawe of oure Lord,
 And lyen on hemselfe,
 Spitten and spuen,
 And speke foule wordes,
 Drynken and drevelen,
 And do men for to gape,
 Likne men, and lye on hem,
 That leneth hem no giftes;
 Thei konne na-moore mynstralcie

Ne musik men to glade, 5688
 Than Munde the millere
 Of *Multa fecit Deus*.
 Ne were hir vile harlotrye,
 Have God my trouthe!
 Sholde nevere kyng ne knyght,
 Ne chanon of Seint Poules,
 Gyve hem to hir yeres-gyve
 The gifte of a grote.

“ Ac murthe and mynstralcie
 Amonges men is nouthe
 Lecherie, losengerye, 5699
 And losels tales,
 Glotonye and grete othes,
 This murthe thei lovyeth.

“ Ac if thei carpen of Crist,
 Thise clerkes and thise lewed
 At mete in hir murthe,
 Whan mynstrals beth stille,
 Thanne telleth thei of the Trinité
 A tale outhur tweye,
 And bryngen forth a balled reson,
 And taken Bernard to witnesse,
 And putten forth a presumpcion
 To preve the sothe.
 Thus thei dryvele at hir deys
 The Deitee to knowe,
 And gnawen God with the gorge,
 Whanne hir guttes fullen.

“ Ac the carefulle may crie
 And carpen at the yate,
 Bothe a-fyngred and a-furst,
 And for chele quake;
 Is ther noon to nyme hym neer,

His anoy to amende, 5722
 But hunten hym as an hound,
 And hoten hym go thennes.
 Litel loveth he that Lord
 That lent hym al that blisse,
 That thus parteth with the povere
 A percell whan hym nedeth.
 Ne were mercy in meene men
 Moore than in riche,
 Mendinauntz mete-lees
 Myghte go to bedde.

God is mucche in the gorge 5733
 Of thise grete maistres,
 Ac amonges meene men
 His mercy and hise werkes.
 And so seith the Sauter,
 I have seighen it ofte :

*Ecce audivimus eam in Efrata, in-
 venimus eam in campis silvæ.*

“ Clerkes and othere kynnes men
 Carpen of God faste,
 And have hym mucche in the mouth ;
 Ac meene men in herte. 5744

“ Freres and faitours
 Han founde swiche questions,
 To plese with proude men,
 Syn the pestilence tyme ;
 And prechen at Seint Poules
 For pure envye of clerkes ;
 That folk is noght fermed in the
 Ne free of hire goodes, [feith,
 Ne sory for hire synnes ;
 So is pride woxen,
 In religion and in al the reme, 5755

Amonges riche and povere, 5756
 That preieres have no power
 The pestilence to lette.

And yet the wrecches of this world
 Is noon y-war by oother ;
 Ne for drede of the deeth
 With-drawe noght hir pride ;
 Ne beth plenteuouse to the povere,
 As pure charité wolde ;
 But in gaynesse and in glotonye
 For-glutten hir good hemselfe,
 And breketh noght to the beggere
 As the Book techeth :

Frangere esurienti panem tuum, etc.
 And the moore he wynneth and welt
 Welthes and richesse,
 And lordeth in londes,
 The lasse good he deleth.

“ Tobye telleth yow noght so,
 Taketh hede, ye riche,
 How the book Bible
 Of hym bereth witnesse.
Si tibi sit copia, abundanter tribue.
Si autem exiguum, illud impertiri
stude libenter.

“ Who so hath muche, spende
 So seith Tobye ; [manliche,
 And who so litel weldeth,
 Rule hym therafter.
 For we have no lettre of oure lif,
 How longe it shal dure,
 Swiche lessons lordes sholde
 Lovye to here,
 And how he myghte moost meynee

Manliche fynde. 5790

“ Nought to fare as a fithelere or
For to seke festes [a frere,
Homliche at othere mennes houses,
And hatien hir owene.

Elenge is the halle
Ech day in the wike,
Ther the lord ne the lady
Liketh noght to sitte.
Now hath ech riche a rule
To eten by hymselfe

In a pryvee parlour, 5801

For povere mennes sake,
Or in a chambre with a chymenee,
And leve the chief halle
That was maad for meles,
Men to eten inne,
And al to spare to spende
That spille shal another.

“ I have y-herd heighe men,
Etynge at the table,
Carpen, as thei clerkes were,
Of Crist, and of hise myghtes; 5812
And leyden fautes upon the fader
That formede us alle,
And carpen ayein clerkes
Crabbede wordes,
Why wolde oure Saveour suffre
Swich a worm in his blisse,
That bigiled the womman,
And the man after,
Thorough whiche wiles and wordes
Thei wente to helle,
And al hir seed for hir synne 5823

The same deeth suffrede. 5824

“ Here lyeth youre lore,
Thise lordes gynneth dispute,
Of that the clerkes us kenneth
Of Crist by the Gospel:
Filius non portabit iniquitatem pa-
tris, etc.

“ Why sholde we that now ben,
For the werkes of Adam,
Roten and to-rende?
Reson wolde it nevere.
Unusquisque portabit onus suum, etc.

“ Swiche motyves thei mene,
Thise maistres in hir glorie,
And maken men in mys-bileve
That muse muche on hire wordes,
Ymaginatif herafterwarde
Shal answeere to hir purpos.

“ Austyn to swiche argueres
Telleth this teme:
Non plus sapere quam oportet.

“ Wilneth nevere to wite
Why that God wolde 5846
Suffre Sathan
His seed to bigile;
Ac bileveth lelly
In the loore of holy chirche,
And preie hym of pardon
And penaunce in thi lyve,
And for his muche mercy
To amende yow here.
For alle that wilneth to wite
The weyes of God almyghty,
I wolde his eighe were in his ers,

And his fynger after, 5858
 That evere wilneth to wite
 Why that God wolde
 Suffre Sathan
 His seed to bigile,
 Or Judas to the Jewes
 Jhesu bitraye.
 Al was as thow woldest,
 Lord, y-worshiped be the !
 And al worth as thow wolt,
 What so we dispute.

“And tho that useth thise hany-
 To blende mennes wittes, [lons
 What is Do-wel fro Do-bet,
 That deaf mote he worthe,
 Siththe he wilneth to wite
 Whiche thei ben bothe,
 But if he lyve in the lif
 That longeth to Do-wel.
 For I dar ben his bolde borgh,
 That do-bet wole he nevere,
 Theigh Do-best drawe on hym
 Day after oother.” 5880

And whan that Wit was y-war
 What dame Studie tolde,
 He bicom so confus,
 He kouthe noght loke,
 And as doumb as deeth,
 And drough hym arere ;
 And for no carpyng I kouthe after,
 Ne knelyng to the grounde,
 I myghte gete no greyn
 Of his grete wittes.
 But al laughynge he louted, 5891

And loked upon Studie, 5892
 In signe that I sholde
 Bi-sechen hire of grace.

And whan I was war of his wille,
 To his wif gan I loute,
 And seide, "Mercy, madame,
 Youre man shal I worthe
 As longe as I lyve,
 Bothe late and rathe
 For to werche youre wille,
 The while my lif dureth,
 With that ye kenne me kyndely
 To knowe what is Do-wel."

"For thi mekenesse, man," quod
 "And for thi mylde speche, [she,
 I shal kenne thee to my cosyn
 That Clergie is hoten.
 He hath wedded a wif,
 Withinne thise sixe monthes,
 Is sib to seven artz,
 Scripture is hir name.
 They two, as I hope,
 After my techyng, 5914
 Shullen wissen thee to Do-wel,
 I dar it undertake."

Thanne was I al so fayn,
 As fowel of fair morwe,
 And gladder than the gle-man
 That gold hath to gifte;
 And asked hire the heighe wey
 Where that Clergie dwelte,
 "And tel me som tokene," quod I,
 "For tyme is that I wende."

"Aske the heighe wey," quod she,

“ Hennes to Suffre 5926
Both wele and wo,
If that thow wolt lerne,
And ryd forth by Richesse,
Ac rest thow noght therinne ;
For if thow couplest thee therwith,
To Clergie comestow nevere.

“ And also the likerouse launde
That Lecherie hatte,
Leve it on thi left half
A large myle or moore,
Til thow come to a court, 5937
Kepe wel thi tunge
Fro lesynges and lither speche
And likerouse drynkes.

“ Thanne shaltow se Sobretee,
And Sympletee of speche,
That ech wight be in wille
His wit thee to shewe ;
And thus shaltow come to Clergie,
That kan manye thynges.

“ Seye hym this signe,
I sette hym to scole, 5948
And that I grete wel his wif,
For I wroot hire manye bokes,
And sette hire to Sapience,
And to the Sauter glose ;
Logyk I lerned hire,
And manye othere lawes
And alle musons in musik
I made hire to knowe.

“ Plato the poete
I putte first to boke,
Aristotle and othere mo 5959

To argue I taughte.

5960

“ Grammer for girles

I garte first to write,

And bette hem with a baleys,

But if thei wolde lerne.

“ Of alle kynne craftes

I contrevd tooles,

Of carpentrie, of kerveres,

And compased masons,

And lerned hem level and lyne,

Though I loke dymme.

“ Ac Theologie hath tened me

Ten score tymes ;

The moore I muse therinne

The mystier it seemeth,

And the depper I devyne

The derker me it thynketh.

It is no science, for sothe,

For to sotile inne ;

A ful lethi thyng it were,

If that love nere ;

Ac for it leteth best bi-love,

I love it the better.

5982

For there that love is ledere,

Ther lakked nevere grace.

Loke thow love lelly,

If thee liketh Do-wel ;

For Do-bet and Do-best

Ben of Loves kynne.

“ In oother science it seith,

I seigh it in Caton :

[amicus,

Qui simulat verbis, nec corde est fidus

Tu quoque fac simile, sic ars delu-

ditur arte.

5993

“ Who so gloseth as gylours
 Go me to the same ; [doon,
 And so shaltow fals folk
 And feith-lees bigile.
 This is Catons kennyng
 To clerkes that he lereth.

“ Ac Theologie techeth noght so,
 Who so taketh yeme ;
 He kenneth us the contrarie,
 Ayein Catons wordes.
 For he biddeth us be as bretheren,
 And bidde for oure enemys, 6004
 And loven hem that lyen on us,
 And lene hem whan hem nedeth,
 And do good ayein yvel,
 God hymself it hoteth.

*Dum tempus habemus, operemur
 bonum ad omnes, maxime
 autem ad domesticos fidei.*

Poul preched the peple
 That perfitnesse lovede,
 To do good for Goddes love,
 And gyven men that asked, 6015
 And namely to swiche
 As suwen oure bileve,
 And alle that lakketh us, or lyeth,
 Oure Lord techeth us to love.
 And noght to greven hem that
 God hymself forbad it. [greveth us,
Mihi vindictam, et ego retribuam.

“ For-thi loke thow love,
 As longe as thow durest ;
 For is no science under sonne
 So sovereyn for the soule. 6026

“ Ac astronomye is an hard
 And yvel for to knowe; [thyng,
 Geometrie and geomesie,
 So gynful of speche,
 Who so thynketh werche with tho
 Thryveth ful late, [two
 For sorcerie is the sovereyn book
 That to tho sciences bilongeth.

“ Yet ar ther fibicches in forceres
 Of fele mennes makyng,
 Experimentz of alkenamyne
 The peple to deceyve; 6038
 If thow thynke to do-wel,
 Deel therwith nevere.

“ Alle these sciences I myself
 Sotiledde and ordeynede,
 And founded hem formest
 Folk to deceyve.
 Tel Clergie this tokene,
 And scripture after,
 To counseille thee kyndely
 To knowe what is Do-wel.”

I seide, “ Graunt mercy, ma-
 And mekely hir grette; [dame,”
 And wente wightly away
 Withoute moore lettyng,
 And til I com to Clergie
 I koude nevere stynte;
 And grette the goode man,
 As Studie me taughte,
 And afterwarde the wif,
 And worshiped hem bothe,
 And tolde hem the tokenes
 That me taught were. 6060

Was nevere gome upon this ground,
 Sith God made the worlde,
 Fairer under-fongen,
 Ne frendlier at ese,
 Than myself, soothly,
 Soone so he wiste
 That I was of Wittes hous,
 And with his wif, dame Studie.

I seide to hem soothly
 That sent was I thider,
 Do-wel and Do-bet
 And Do-best to lerne. [Clergie,
 "It is a commune lyf," quod
 "On holy chirche to bileve,
 With alle the articles of the feith
 That falleth to be knowe ;
 And that is to bileve lelly,
 Bothe lered and lewed,
 On the grete God
 That gynnyng hadde nevere,
 And on the soothfast sone
 That saved mankynde
 Fro the dedly deeth
 And develes power, [Goost,
 Thorough the help of the Holy
 The which goost is of bothe,
 Thre persones, ac noght
 In plurel nombre ;
 For al is but oon God,
 And ech is God hymselfe.

*Deus pater, Deus filius, Deus
 spiritus sanctus.*

God the fader, God the sone,
 God holy goost of bothe,

6r 83

6094

Makere of mankynde, 6095
And of beestes bothe.

“ Austyn the olde
Herof made bokes,
And hymself ordeyned
To sadde us in bileve.
Who was his auctour ?
Alle the foure euvangelistes,
And Crist cleped hymself so,
The euvangelistes bereth witnesse.

“ Alle the clerkes under Crist
Ne koude this assoille ; 6106
But thus it bi-longeth to bileve
To lewed that willen do-wel.
For hadde nevere freke fyn wit
The feith to dispute,
Ne man hadde no merite,
Myghte it ben y-preved.

*Fides non habet meritum, ubi hu-
mana ratio præbet experimen-
tum.*

“ Thanne is Do-bet to suffre
For the soules helthe, 6117
Al that the book bit
Bi holi cherches techyng ;
And that is, man, bi thy myght,
For mercies sake.

Loke thow werche it in werk,
That thi word sheweth,
Swich as thow semest in sighte
Be in assay y-founde.

*Appare quod es, vel esto quod ap-
pares.*

“ And lat no body be 6128

By thi beryng bigiled, 6129
 But be swich in thi soule
 As thow semest withoute.

“Thanne is Do-best to be boold
 To blame the gilty,
 Sythenes thow seest thiself
 As in soule clene ;
 Ac blame thow nevere body,
 And thow be blame worthy.
Si culpare velis,
Culpabilis esse cavebis ;
Dogma tuum sordet, 6140
Cum te tua culpa remordet.

“God in the Gospel
 Grevously repreveth
 Alle that lakketh any lif,
 And lakkes han hemselfe.
Qui consideras festucam in oculo
fratris tui, trabem in oculo
tuo, etc.

“Why menestow thi mood for a
 In thi brotheres eighe, [mote
 Sithen a beem in thyn owene 6151
 A-blyndeth thiselve.
Ejice primo trabem in oculo tuo,
etc.

Which letteth thee to loke
 Lasse outhere more.

“I rede ech a blynd bosarde
 Do boote to hymselfe,
 For abbotes and for priours,
 And for alle manere prelates,
 As persons and parissches preestes
 That preche sholde and teche 6162

Alle maner men to amenden 6163
Bi hire myghtes.

“ This text was told yow,
To ben y-war, er ye taughte,
That ye were swiche as ye seye,
So salve with othere ; [lost,
For Goddes word wolde noght be
For that wercheth evere ;
If it availed noght the commune,
It myghte availle yowselve.

“ Ac it semeth now soothly
To the worldes sighte, 6174
That Goddes word wercheth noght
On lered ne on lewed,
But in swich a manere
As Marc meneth in the gospel :
Dum cæcus ducit cæcum, ambo in
foveam cadunt. [thus,

“ Lewed men may likne yow
That the beem lith in youre eighen ;
And the festu is fallen

For youre defaute,
In alle mauer men, 6185
Thorugh mausede preestes.

The Bible bereth witnesse

That the folk of Israel

Bittre a-boughte the giltes

Of two badde preestes,

Offyn and Fynes,

For hir coveitise,

Archa Dei mys-happed,

And Ely brak his nekke. [heron,

“ For-thi the corectours claweth
And corecteth first yowselve 6196

And thanne mowe ye safly seye, 6197
 As David made in the Sauter,
*Existimasti inique quod ero tui
 similis, arguam te, et statuum
 contra faciem tuam.*

“ And thanne shul burel clerkes
 ben abasshed

To blame yow or to greve,
 And carpen noght as thei carpe now,
 Ne calle yow doumbe houndes.
Canes non valentes latrare. [word,
 And drede to wrathe yow in any
 Youre werkmanshippe to lette,
 And be prester at youre preiere,
 Than for a pound of nobles.
 And al for youre holynesse,
 Have ye this in herte.

“ In scole there is scorn,
 But if a clerk wol lerne,
 And gret love and likyng,
 For ech of hem loveth oother.

“ Ac now is Religion a rydere,
 A romere aboute, 6218
 A ledere of love-dayes,
 And a lond-buggere,
 A prikere on a palfrey
 Fro manere to manere,
 An heepe of houndes at his ers
 As he a lord were.
 And but if his knave knele
 That shal his coppe brynge,
 He loureth on hym, and asketh hym
 Who taughte hym curteisie.

“ Litel hadde lordes to doon, 6229

To gyve lond from hire heires 6230
 To religiouse that han no routhe,
 Though it reyne on hir auters.

“ In many places ther thei ben
 By hemself at ese, [persons,
 Of the povere have thei no pité;
 And that is hir charité.
 Ac thei leten hem as lordes
 Hire londes lyen so brode.

“ Ac ther shal come a kyng,
 And confesse yow religiouses,
 And bete yow as the bible telleth 6241
 For brekyng of youre rule;
 And amende monyals,
 Monkes and chanons,
 And puten to hir penaunce
Ad pristinum statum ire;
 And barons with erles beten hem,
 Thorugh *Beatus-virres* techyng,
 That hir barnes claymen
 And blame yow foule.

*Hi in curribus et hi in equis ipsi
 obligati sunt, etc.* 6252

“ And thanne freres in hir fray-
 Shul fynden a keye [tour
 Of Costantyns cofres,
 In which is the catel
 That Gregories god-children
 Han yvele despended.

“ And thanne shal the abbot of
 Abyngdone,
 And al his issue for evere,
 Have a knok of a kyng,
 And incurable the wounde. 6263

“ That this worth sooth, seke ye
That ofte over-se the Bible :

*Quomodo cessavit exactor, quievit
tributum, contrivit Dominus
baculum impiorum et virgam
dominantium cædentium plaga
insanabili.*

“ Ac er that kyng come,
Caym shal awake. [doun,
But Do-wel shal dyngen hym a-
And destruye his myghte.”

“ Thanne is Do-wel and Do-bet,”
Dominus and knyghthode.” [quod I,

“ I nel noght scorne,” quod
“ But if scryveynes lye ; [Scripture,

Kynghod ne knyghthod,
By noght I kan a-wayte,
Helpeth noght to hevene-ward

Oone heris ende ;

Ne richesse right noght,

Ne reautee of lordes.

Poul preveth it impossible

Riche men to have hevene. 6286

Salomon seith also

That silver is worst to lovye :

*Nihil iniquius quam amare pecu-
niam.*

And Caton kenneth us to coveiten it
Naught but as nede techeth,

*Dilige denarium, sed parce dilige
formam.*

And patriarkes and prophetes,

And poetes bothe,

Writen to wissen us 6297

To wilne no richesse, 6298
 And preiseden poverte with paci-
 The apostles bereth witenesse [ence;
 That thei han eritage in hevene,
 And by trewe righte ;
 Ther riche men no right may cleyme,
 But of ruthe and grace."

" *Contra*," quod I, " by Crist !
 That kan I repreve,
 And preven it by Peter,
 And by Poul bothe,
 That is baptized beth saaf, 6309
 Be he riche or povere." [Scripture,
 " That is *in extremis*," quod
 " Amonges Sarzens and Jewes,
 They mowen be saved so,
 And that is oure bileve,
 That an un-cristene in that caas
 May cristen an hethen ;
 And for his lele bileve,
 Whan he the lif tyneth,
 Have the heritage of hevene
 As any man cristene. 6320

" Ac cristene men withoute moore
 Maye noght come to hevene ;
 For that Crist for cristene men
 Deide and confermed the lawe,
 That who so wolde and wilneth
 With Crist to arise,
Si cum Christo surexistis, etc.
 He sholde lovye and leve,
 And the lawe fulfille.
 That is, love thi lord God
 Levest aboven alle ; 6331

And after, alle cristene creatures
 In commune, ech man oother ;
 And thus bi-longeth to lovye,
 That leveth be saved.
 And but we do thus in dede,
 At the day of dome
 It shal bi-sitten us ful soure
 The silver that we kepen ; [be,
 And oure bakkes that mothe-eten
 And seen beggeris go naked ;
 Or delit in wyn and wilde fowel,
 And wite any in defaute. 6343
 For every cristene creature
 Sholde be kynde til oother,
 And sithen hethen to helpe,
 In hope of amendement.

“ God hoteth heighe and lowe
 That no man hurte oother ;
 And seith, ‘ Slee noght that sem-
 To myn owene liknesse, [blable is
 But if I sende thee som tokene,’
 And seith ‘ *Non machaberis*.
 Is slee noght, but suffre, 6354
 And al for the beste ; [torie
 For I shal punysshē hem in purga-
 Or in the put of helle,
 Ech man for hise mysdedes,
 But mercy it lette.’ ”

“ **T**HIS is a long lesson,” quod I,
 “ And litel am I the wiser ;
 Where Do-wel is or Do-bet,
 Derkliche ye shewen.
 Many tales ye tellen 6364

That Theologie lerneth ; 6365
 And that I man maad was,
 And my name y-entred
 In the legende of lif
 Longe er I were, [nesse,
 Or ellis un-writen for som wikked-
 As Holy Writ witnesseth :
*Nemo ascendit ad cælum, nisi qui
 de cælo descendit.*

“ I leve it wel,” quod I, “ by oure
 And on no lettrure bettre. [Lord!
 For Salomon the sage, 6376
 That Sapience taughte,
 God gat hym grace of wit,
 And alle hise goodes after ;
 He demed wel and wisely,
 As Holy Writ telleth.
 Aristotle and he,
 Who wissed men bettre ?
 Maistres that of Goddes mercy
 Techen men and prechen,
 Of hir wordes thei wissen us
 For wisest as in hir tyme, 6387
 And al holy chirche
 Holdeth hem bothe y-dampned.

“ And if I sholde werche by hir
 To wyne me hevene, [werkes
 That for hir werkes and wit
 Now wonyeth in pyne,
 Thanne wroughte I un-wisly,
 What so evere ye preche.

“ Ac of fele witty, in feith,
 Litel ferly I have,
 Though hir goost be un-gracious 6398

God for to plese. 6399
 For many men on this moolde
 Moore setten hir hertes
 In good than in God ;
 For-thi hem grace failleth
 At hir mooste meschief,
 Whan thei shal lif lete.
 As Salomon dide, and swiche othere
 That shewed grete wittes ;
 Ac hir werkes, as holy writ seith,
 Were evere the contrarie.
 For-thi wise witted men, 6410
 And wel y-lettrede clerkes,
 As thei seyen hemself,
 Selde doon therafter.

Super cathedra Moysi, etc.

“ Ac I wene it worth of manye,
 As was in Noes tyme,
 Tho he shoop that shipe
 Of shides and of bordes ;
 Was nevere wrighte saved that
 wroghte theron,
 Ne oothir werkman ellis, 6421
 But briddes, and beestes,
 And the blissed Noe,
 And his wif with hise sones,
 And also hire wyves ;
 Of wightes that it wroghte
 Was noon of hem y-saved. [folk
 “ God leve it fare noght so bi
 That the feith techeth !
 Of holi chirche, that herberwe is
 And Goddes hous to save
 And shilden us from shame therinne,

As Noes ship dide beestes; 6433
 And men that maden it
 A-mydde the flood a-dreynten.
 The culorum of this clause
 Curatours is to mene, [make
 That ben carpenters holy kirk to
 For Cristes owene beestes :
Homines et jumenta salvabis, Do-
mine, etc.

“ On Good Friday I fynde
 A felon was y-saved,
 That hadde lyved al his lif 6444
 With lesynges and with thefte;
 And for he bekned to the cros,
 And to Crist shrof him,
 He was sonner y-saved
 Than seint Johan the Baptist;
 And or Adam or Ysaye,
 Or any of the prophetes,
 That hadde y-leyen with Lucifer
 Many longe yeres,
 A robbere was y-raunsoned
 Rather than thei alle, [torie,
 Withouten any penaunce of purga-
 To perpetuel blisse.

“ Than Marie Maudeleyne
 What womman dide werse?
 Or who worse than David,
 That Uries deeth conspired?
 Or Poul the apostle,
 That no pité hadde
 Muche cristene kynde
 To kille to dethe?
 And now ben thise as sovereigns
 With seintes in hevene, 6467

Tho that wroughte wikkedlokest 6468
In world tho thei were.

And tho that wisely wordeden,

And writen manye bokes

Of wit and of wisdom,

With dampned soules wonye.

That Salomon seith, I trowe be

And certein of us alle : [sooth

*Sunt justi atque sapientes et opera
eorum in manu Dei sunt, etc.*

“ Ther are witty and wel libbynge,

Ac hire werkes ben y-hudde 6479

In the hondes of almyghty God,

And he woot the sothe,

Wherfore a man worth allowed

And hise lele werkes, [there,

Or ellis for his yvel wille,

And for envye of herte,

And be allowed as he lyved so ;

For by the luthere men knoweth
the goode.

“ And wherby wiste men which

If alle thyng blak were ? [were whit,

And who were a good man,

But if ther were som sherewe ?

For-thi lyve we forth with othere

I leve fewe ben goode ; [men,

For *quant oportet vient en place,*

Il n'y ad que pati.

And he that may al amende,

Have mercy on us alle ! [seide

For sothest word that ever God

Was tho he seide *Nemo bonus.*

“ Clergie tho of Cristes mouth

Comended was it litel ; 6501

For he seide to Seint Peter, 6502
 And to swiche as he lovede,
Cum steteritis ante reges et præ-
sides, etc.

Though ye come bifore kynges
 And clerkes of the lawe,
 Beth noght abasshed,
 For I shal be in youre mouthes,
 And gyve yow wit and wille,
 And konnyng to conclude
 Hem alle that ayeins yow
 Of Cristendom disputen. 6513

“ David maketh mencion,
 He spak amonges kynges, [hym
 And myghte no kyng over-comen
 As by konnyng of speche,
 But wit and wisdom
 Wan nevere the maistrie,
 Whan man was at meschief,
 Withoute the moore grace.

“ The doughtieste doctour
 And devinour of the Trinitee
 Was Austyn the olde, 6524
 And heighest of the foure,
 Seide thus in a sermon,
 I seigh it writen ones :

Ecce ipsi idiotæ irapiunt cælum, ubi
nos sapientes in inferno mer-
gimur.

“ And is to mene to men,
 Moore ne lesse,
 Arn none rather y-ravysshed
 Fro the righte bileve,
 Than are thise konnyng clerkes
 That konne manye bokes. 6536

“ Ne none sonner saved, 6537
 Ne sadder of bileve,
 Than plowmen and pastours,
 And othere commune laborers ;
 Souteres and shepherdes,
 And othere lewed jutes,
 Percen with a pater-noster
 The paleys of hevene, [lees
 And passen purgatorie penaunce-
 At her hennes partyng
 Into the blisse of paradis,
 For hir pure bileve, 6548
 That imparfitly here knewe,
 And ek lyvede.

“ Ye men knowe clerkes,
 That han corsed the tyme [moore
 That evere thei kouthe or knewe
 Than *Credo in Deum patrem* ;
 And principally hir pater-noster
 Many a persone hath wissed.

“ I se ensamples myself,
 And so may manye othere,
 That servauntz that serven lordes
 Selde fallen in arerage,
 And tho that kepen the lordes catel,
 Clerkes and reves.

“ Right so lewed men,
 And of litel knowyng,
 Selden falle thei so foule
 And so fer in synne,
 As clerkes of holy chirche
 That kepen Cristes tresor,
 The which is mannes soule to save,
 As God seith in the Gospel :
Ite vos in vineam meam.” 6571



Passus Undecimus.

THANNE Scripture scorned
And a skile tolde, [me,
And lakked me in Latyn,
And light by me she sette,
And seide "*Multi multa sciunt
Et seipsos nesciunt.*"

Tho wepte I for wo
And wrathe of hir speche ;
And in a wynkyng wrathe
Weex I a-slepe.
A merveillous metels
Mette me thanne, 6583
That I was ravysshed right there,
And Fortune me fette,
And into the lond of longynge
Allone she me broughte, [erthe
And in a mirour that highte middel-
She made me to biholde.
"Sone," she seide to me,
"Here myghtow se wondres,
And knowe that thow coveitest,
And come therto, peraunter."

Thanne hadde Fortune folwynge
Two faire damyseles ; [hire

Concupiscentia-carnis

6596

Men called the elder mayde,
And Coveitise-of-eighes
Y-called was that oother.
Pride-of-parfit-lyvyng
Pursued hem bothe,
And bad me for my contenaunce
Acounten Clergie lighte.

Concupiscentia-carnis

Colled me aboute the nekke,
And seide, "Thow art yong and
And hast yeres y-nowe [yeepe,
For to lyve longe,
And ladies to lovye;
And in this mirour thow myght se
Myghtes ful manye,
That leden thee wole to likyng
Al thi lif tyme."

The secounde seide the same,
"I shal sewe thi wille;
Til thow be a lord and have lond,
Leten thee I nelle,
That I ne shal folwe thi felawshipe,
If Fortune it like."

"He shal fynde me his frend,"

Quod Fortune therafter;

"The freke that folwede my wille
Failed nevere blisse." [Elde,

Thanne was ther oon that highte
That hevy was of chere; [thee,
"Man," quod he, "if I mete with
By Marie of hevene!

Thow shalt fynde Fortune thee faille
At thi mooste nede,

6629

And *Concupiscentia-carnis* 6630
 Clene thee forsake.

Bittrely shaltow banne thanne
 Bothe dayes and nyghtes
 Coveitise-of-eighe,
 That evere thow hir knewe,
 And Pride-of-parfitly-vynge
 To muche peril thee brynge."

"Ye, recche thee nevere," quod
 Rechelesnesse,

Stood forthe in raggede clothes,
 "Folwe forth that Fortune wole, 6640
 Thow hast wel fer til Elde;
 A man may stoupe tyme y-nogh,
 Whan he shal tyne the crowne.

"*Homo proponit* quod a poete,
 And Plato he highte,
 And *Deus disponit* quod he,
 Lat God doon his wille.
 If Truthe wol witnesse it be wel do
 Fortune to folwe,

Concupiscentia-carnis,
 Ne Coveitise-of-eighes, 6651
 Ne shal noght greve thee gretly,
 Ne bigile, but if thow wolt thiselve."

"Ye, fare wel Phippe and Faun-
 And forth gan me drawe, [teltee,"
 Til *Concupiscentia-carnis*
 Acorded alle my werkes.

"Alas! eighe," quod Elde
 And Holynesse bothe, [nesse,
 That wit shal torne to wrecched-
 For wil to have his likyng."

Coveitise-of-eighes 6662

Conforted me anoon after, 6663
 And folwed me fourty wynter
 And a fiste moore,
 That of Do-wel ne Do-bet
 Ne deyntee me thoughte.
 I hadde no likyng, leve me if thee
 Of hem ought to knowe. [list,
 Coveitise-of-eighes
 Com ofter in mynde
 Than Do-wel or Do-bet,
 Among my dedes alle.

Coveitise-of-eighes 6674
 Conforted me ofte,
 And seide, " Have no conscience
 How thow come to goode.
 Go confesse thee to som frere,
 And shewe hym thi synnes ;
 For whiles Fortune is thi frend
 Freres wol thee lovye,
 And fecche thee to hir fraternitee,
 And for the biseke
 To hir priour provincial
 A pardon for to have, 6685
 And preien for thee pol by pol,
 If thow be *pecuniosus*."

*Sed pœna pecuniaria non sufficit pro
 spiritualibus delictis.*

By wissynge of this wenche I
 wroughte,
 Hir wordes were so swete,
 Til I for-yat youthe,
 And yarn into elde.

And thanne was Fortune my foo,
 For al hir faire speche ; 6695

And poverte pursued me, 6696
And putte me lowe.

And tho fond I the frere a-fered,
And flittyng bothe
Ayeins oure firste for-ward; ;
For I seide I nolde
Be buried at hire hous;
But at my parisshe chirche.
For I herde ones
How Conscience it tolde,
That there a man were cristned
Be kynde he sholde be buryed;
Or where he were parisschen,
Right there he sholde be graven.
And for I seide thus to freres,
A fool thei me helden,
And loved me the lasse
For my lele speche.

Ac yet I cryde on my confessour,
That heeld hymself so konnyng;
“ By my feith ! frere,” quod I,
“ Ye faren lik thise woweris
That wedde none widwes 6718
But for to welden hir goodes.
Right so, by the roode !
Roughte ye nevere
Where my body were buryed,
By so ye hadde my silver.

“ Ich have muche merveille of
And so hath many another, [yow,
Whi youre covent coveiteth
To confesse and to burye,
Rather than to baptize barnes
That ben catecumelynges. 6729

Baptizynge and buryinge 6730

Bothe beth ful nedefulle ;
 Ac muche moore meritorie,
 Me thynketh it is to baptize.
 For a baptized man may,
 As thise maistres telleth,
 Thorough contricion come
 To the heighe hevene.

Sola contritio, etc.

Ac barn withouten bapteme
 May noght so be saved.

Nisi quis renatus fuerit. 6741

Loke ye, lettred men,
 Wheither I lye or do noght."

And Lewté loked on me,

And I loured after. [Lewtee,

"Wherfore lourestow?" quod

And loked on me harde.

"If I dorste," quod I, "amonges
 This metels avowe!" [men

"Yis, by Peter and by Poul!"
 quod he,

And took hem bothe to witnesse.

*Non oderis fratres secrete in corde
 tuo, sed publice argue illos."*

"They wole aleggen also," quod I,

"And by the Gospel preven:

Nolite judicare quemquam."

"And wherof serveth lawe?"
 quod Lewtee,

"If no lif undertoke it,

Falsnesse ne faiterie,

For som what the apostle seide,

Non oderis fratrem. 6761

And in the Sauter also 6762
 Seith David the prophete,
*Existimasti inique quod ero tui
 similis, etc.*

“ It is *licitum* for lewed men
 To sigge the sothe,
 If hem liketh and lest,
 Ech a lawe it graunteth ;
 Excepte persons and preestes,
 And prelates of holy chirche,
 It falleth noght for that folk
 No tales to telle, 6773
 Though the tale be trewe,
 And it touche synne.

“ Thyng that al the world woot,
 Wherefore sholdestow spare
 To reden it in retorik
 To a-rate dedly synne ?
 Ac be nevere moore the firste
 Defaute to blame ; [first,
 Though thou se yvel, seye it noght
 Be sory it nere amended.
 No thyng that is pryvé, 6784
 Publice thou it nevere ;
 Neither for love preise it noght,
 Ne lakke it for envye.

Parum lauda, vitupera parcius.”

“ He seith sooth,” quod Scripture
 tho,
 And skipte an heigh, and preched.
 Ac the matere that she meved,
 If lewed men it knewe,
 The lasse, as I leve,
 Lovyen it thei wolde. 6794

This was hir teme and hir text,
I took ful good hede ;
Multi to a mangerie
And to the mete were sompned ;
And whan the peple was plener
comen,

The porter unpynned the yate,
And plukked in *Pauci* pryveliche,
And leet the remenaunt go rome.

Al for tene of hir text
Trembled myn herte ;
And in a weer gan I wexe, 6805
And with myself to dispute
Wheither I were chosen or noght
chosen.

On holi chirche I thoughte,
That under-fonged me atte font
For oon of Goddes chosene.
For Crist cleped us alle,
Come if we wolde,
Sarzens and scismatikes,
And so he dide the Jewes.

O vos omnes sitientes, venite, etc.
And bad hem souke for synne
Safly at his breste,
And drynke boote for bale,
Brouke it who so myghte.

“Thanne may alle cristene come,”
quod I,

“And cleyme there entree
By the blood that he boughte us
And thorough bapteme after. [with,
Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit,
etc. 6826

For though a cristen man coveited
 His cristendom to reneye,
 Rightfully to reneye
 No reson it wolde.

“For may no cherl chartre make,
 Ne his catel selle,
 Withouten leve of his lord ;
 No lawe wol it graunte.
 Ac he may renne in arerage,
 And rome so fro home,
 And as a reneyed caytif
 Recchelesly rennen aboute. 6838
 And reson shal rekene with hym,
 And casten hym in arerage,
 And putten hym after in a prison
 In purgatorie to brenne,
 For hise arerages rewarden hym
 To the day of dome ; [there
 But if Contricion wol come,
 And crye, by his lyve,
 Mercy for hise mysdedes,
 With mouthe and with herte.”

“That is sooth,” seide Scripture ;
 “May no synne lette
 Mercy al to amende,
 And mekenesse hir folwe.
 For thei beth, as oure bokes telleth,
 Above Goddes werkes.”

*Misericordia ejus super omnia opera
 ejus.*

“Ye, baw for bokes,” quod oon
 Was broken out of helle,
 Highte Trojanus, hadde ben a trewe
 Took witnesse at a pope, [knyght,

How he was ded and dampned 6861
 To dwellen in pyne,
 For an uncristene creature;
 " Clerkes wite the sothe,
 That al the clergie under Crist
 Ne myghte me cracche fro helle,
 But oonliche love and leautee,
 And my laweful domes.

" Gregorie wiste this wel,
 And wilned to my soule
 Savacion for soothnesse
 That he seigh in my werkes; 6872
 And after that he wepte,
 And wilned me were graunted
 Grace; withouten any bede biddying
 His boone was under-fongen,
 And I saved, as ye see,
 Withouten syngynge of masses.
 By love and by lernyng
 Of my lyvyng, in truthe,
 Broughte me fro bitter peyne
 Ther no biddying myghte."

Lo! ye lordes, what leautee dide
 By an emperour of Rome,
 That was an uncristene creature,
 As clerkes fyndeth in bokes.
 Nought thorough preiere of a pope,
 But for his pure truthe,
 Was that Sarsen saved.
 As seint Gregorie bereth witnesse.

Wel oughte ye, lordes, that lawes
 kepe,
 This lesson to have in mynde,
 And on Trojanus truthe to thenke,

And do truthe to the peple. 6194

“ Lawe, withouten love,” quod Tro-

“ Ley ther a bene, [janus,

Or any science under sonne,

The sevene artz and alle,

But thei ben lerned for oure Lordes

Lost is al the tyme ;” [love,

For no cause to cacche silver therby,

Ne to be called a maister,

But al for love of oure Lord,

And the bet to love the peple,

For seint Johan seide it, 6905

And sothe arn hise wordes.

Qui non diligit, manet in morte.

Who so loveth noght, leve me,

He lyveth in deep deyinge ;

And that alle manere men,

Enemyes and frendes,

Love hir eyther oother,

And leve hem, as hemselve,

Who so leveth noght, he loveth

God woot the sothe ! [noght,

Crist comaundeth ech a creature

To conformen hym to lovye,

And sovereynly the povere peple,

And hir enemyes after.

For hem that haten us

Is oure merite to lovye,

And povere peple to plese,

Hir preieres maye us helpe.

And oure joye and oure heele

Jhesu Crist of hevene

In a povere mannes apparaille

Pursued us evere ;

And loketh on us in hir liknesse,
 And that with lovely chere,
 To knowen us by oure kynde herte
 And castynge of oure eighen,
 Wheither we love the lordes here
 Bifore the lord of blisse ;
 And exciteth us by the Euvangelie
 That whan we maken festes,
 We sholde noght clepe oure kyn
 Ne none kynnes riche. [therto,
Cum facitis convivias, nolite invi-
tare amicos. 6939

“ Ac calleth the carefulle therto,
 The croked and the povere.
 For youre frendes wol feden yow,
 And fonde yow to quyte [gifte ;
 Youre festynge and youre faire
 Ech frend quyteth so oother.

“ Ac for the povere I shal paie,
 And pure wel quyte hir travaille,
 That gyveth hem mete or moneie,
 Or loveth hem for my sake.”
 For the beste ben som riche, 6950
 And some beggeres and povere.
 For alle are we Cristes creatures,
 And of his cofres riche,
 And bretheren as of oo blood,
 As wel beggeres as erles.
 For on Calvarie of Cristes blood
 Cristendom gan sprynge,
 And bloody bretheren we bicomen
 Of o body y-wonne, [there
 As *quasi modo geniti*,
 And gentil-men echone ; 6961

No beggere ne boye amonges us,
But if it synne made.

*Qui facit peccatum, servus est
peccati.*

“ In the olde lawe,
As holy lettre telleth,
Mennes sones
Men callen us echone,
Of Adames issue and Eve,
Ay til God man deide;
And after his resurexcion
Redemptor was his name, [y-bought,
And we hise bretheren thorugh hym
Bothe riche and povere. [ren,

“ For-thi love we as leve brethe-
And ech man laughe of oother;
And of that ech man may forbere
Amende there it nedeth;
And every man helpe oother,
For hennes shul we alle.

Alter alterius onera portate.

“ And be we noght un-kynde of
oure catel,
Ne of oure konnyng neither. 6984
For woot no man how neigh it is
To ben y-nome fro bothe.
For-thi lakke no lif oother,
Though he moore Latyn knowe;
Ne under-nyme noght foule;
For is noon withoute defaute.
For what evere clerkes carpe
Of cristendom or ellis,
Crist to a commune womman seide,
In commune at a feste, 6994

That *fides sua* sholde saven hire,
And salven hire of synnes.

“ Thanne is bileve a lele help,
Above logyk or lawe.
Of logyk or of lawe
In *Legenda Sanctorum*
Is litel alowaunce maad,
But if bileve hem helpe.
For it is over longe er logyk
Any lesson assoille ;
And lawe is looth to lovye,
But if he lacche silver. 7006
Bothe logyk and lawe,
That loveth noght to lye,
I conseilte alle cristene
Clyve noght theron to soore ;
For some wordes I fynde writen,
That were of feithes techyng,
That saved synful men,
As seint Johan bereth witnesse.
Eadem mensura qua mensi fueritis,
remetietur vobis.

“ For-thi lerne we the lawe of
As oure Lord taughte, [love,
And as seint Gregorie seide
For mannes soule helthe :
Melius est scrutari scelera nostra,
quam naturas rerum.

“ Why I meve this matere,
Is moost for the povere ;
For in hir liknesse oure Lord
Ofte hath ben y-knowe.
Witnesse in the Pask wyke
Whan he yede to Emaüs ; 7028

Cleophas ne knew hym noght 7029
 That he Crist were,
 For his povere apparaille,
 And pilgrymes wedes,
 Til he blessedde and brak
 The breed that thei eten;
 So bi hise werkes thei wisten
 That he was Jhesus,
 Ac by clothyng thei knewe hym
 Ne by carpyng of tunge. [noght,
 And al was in ensample
 To us synfulle here, 7040
 That we sholde be lowe
 And loveliche of speche, [proudly,
 And apparaille us noght over
 For pilgrymes are we alle.

“And in the apparaille of a povere
 And pilgrymes liknesse, [man,
 Many tyme God hath ben met
 Among nedy peple,
 Ther nevere segge hym seigh
 In secte of the riche.

“Seint Johan and othere seintes
 Were seyen in poore clothyng,
 And as povere pilgrymes
 Preyed mennes goodes. [lighte,

“Jhesu Crist on a Jewes doghter
 Gentil womman though she were,
 Was a pure povere maide,
 And to a povere man y-wedded.

“Martha on Marie Maudeleyne
 An huge pleynt made,
 And to oure Saveour self
 Seide thise wordes : 7062

*Domine, non est tibi curæ quod
soror mea reliquit me solam
ministrare.*

“ And hastily God answerde,
And eithers wille folwed,
Bothe Marthaes and Maries,
As Mathew bereth witnesse ;
Ac poverte God putte bifore,
And preised that the bettre.
*Maria optimam partem elegit, quæ
non, etc.*

“ And alle the wise that evere
By aught I kan aspye, [were,
Preiseden poverte for best lif,
If pacience it folwed,
And bothe bettre and blesseder
By many fold than richesse.
For though it be sour to suffre,
Therafter cometh swete ;
As on a walnote withoute
Is a bitter barke,
And after that bitter bark,
Be the shelle aweye, 7085
Is a kernel of confort
Kynde to restore.

“ So is after poverte or penaunce
Paciently y-take ;
For it maketh a man to have mynde
In God, and a gret wille
To wepe and to wel bidde,
Wherof wexeth mercy,
Of which Crist is a kernelle
To conforte the soule.
And wel sikerer he slepeth, 7096

The man that is povere, 7097
 And lasse he dredeth deeth,
 And in derke to ben y-robbed,
 Than he that is right riche,
 Reson bereth witenesse.
Pauper ego ludo, dum tu dives meditaris.

“ Al though Salomon seide,
 As folk seeth in the Bible,
Divitias nec paupertates, etc.
 Wiser than Salomon was
 Bereth witenesse and taughte 7108
 That parfit poverté was
 No possession to have,
 And lif moost likynge to God,
 As Luc bereth witenesse :
Si vis perfectus esse, vade et vende.

“ And is to mene to men
 That on this moolde lyven,
 Who so wole be pure parfit
 Moot possession forsake,
 Or selle it, as seith the Book,
 And the silver dele
 To beggeris that goon and begge
 And bidden good for Goddes love.
 For failed nevere man mete
 That myghtful God serveth,
 As David seith in the Sauter
 To swiche that ben in wille
 To serve God goodliche,
 Ne greveth hym no penaunce :
Nihil impossibile volenti.
 Ne lakketh nevere liflode,
 Lynnen ne wollen. 7130

*Inquirentes autem Dominum non
minuentur omni bono.*

“ If preestes weren parfite,
Thei wolde no silver take
For masses ne for matyns,
Noght hir mete of usureres,
Ne neither kirtel ne cote,
Theigh thei for cold sholde deye,
And thei hir devoir dide,
As David seith in the Sauter:
Judica me, Deus, et decerne causam
meam. 7142

“ *Spera-in-Deo* speketh of preestes
That have no spendyng silver,
That if thei travaille truweliche
And truste in God almyghty,
Hem sholde lakke no liflode,
Neyther lynnen ne wollen.
And the title that ye take ordres by
Telleth ye ben avaunced ; [silver
Thanne nedeth yow noght to take
For masses that ye syngen.
For he that took yow youre title,
Sholde take yow youre wages,
Or the bisshop that blessed yow,
If that ye ben worthi. [knyght,

“ For made nevere kyng no
But he hadde catel to spende
As bifel for a knyght,
Or foond hym for his strengthe.
It is a careful knyght,
And of a caytif kynges makyng,
That hath no lond ne lynage riche,
Ne good loos of hise handes. 7164

" The same I segge, for sothe,
 By alle swiche preestes
 That han neither konnyng ne kyn,
 But a crowne one,
 And a title, a tale of noght,
 To his liflode at his meschief.
 He hath moore bileve, as I leve,
 To lacche through his croune
 Cure, than for konnyng,
 Or knowen for clene berynge.
 I have wonder for why,
 And wherfore the bisshope 7176
 Maketh swiche preestes,
 That lewed men bitrayen.

" A chartre is chalangeable
 Bifore a chief justice;
 If fals Latyn be in that lettre,
 The lawe it impugneth,
 Or peynted parentrelynarie,
 Or percelles over-skipped;
 The gome that gloseth so chartres
 For a goky is holden.

" So is it a goky, by God! 7187
 That in his gospel failleth,
 Or in masse or in matyns
 Maketh any defaute.

Qui offendit in uno, in omnibus est reus.

" And also in the Sauter
 Seith David to over-skipperis,
Psallite Deo nostro, psallite, quo-
niam rex terræ Deus Israel,
psallite sapienter.

" The bisshop shal be blamed

Bifore God, as I leve, [knyghtes
 That crouneth swiche Goddes
 That konneth noght *sapienter*
 Synge, ne psalmes rede,
 Ne seye a masse of the day.
 And never neither is blame-lees
 The bisshope ne the chapeleyn;
 For hir either is endited,
 And that is, *ignorantia*
Non excusat episcopos
Nec idiotas preestes.

“ This lokynge on lewed preestes
 Hath doon me lepe from poverte,
 The which I preise ther pacience is
 Moore perfit than richesse.”

A C muche moore in metynge
 thus
 With me gan oon dispute;
 And slepyng I seigh al this.
 And sithen cam Kynde,
 And nempned me by my name,
 And bad me nymen hede, 7219
 And thorough the wondres of this
 Wit for to take. [world
 And on a mountaigne that myddel-
 Highte, as me thoughte, [erthe
 I was fet forth
 By ensamples to knowe
 Thorough ech a creature and kynde
 My creatour to lovy.

I seigh the sonne and the see,
 And the sond after;
 And where that briddes and beestes

By hir makes yeden ; 7231
 Wilde wormes in wodes,
 And wonderful foweles
 With fleckede fetheres
 And of fele colours.

Man and his make
 I myghte bothe biholde ;
 Poverté and plentee ;
 Bothe pees and werre ;
 Blisse and bale bothe
 I seigh al at ones ;
 And how men token mede, 7242
 And mercy refused.

Reson I seigh soothly
 Sewen alle beestes,
 In etynge, in drynkynge,
 And in engendrynge of kynde ;
 And after cours of concepcion,
 Noon took kepe of oother [tyme,
 As whan thei hadde ryde in rotey
 Anoon right therafter
 Males drowen hem to males
 A-morwenynges by hemselfe, 7253
 And in evenynges also
 The males ben fro femelles.
 Ther ne was cow ne cow-kynde
 That conceyved hadde,
 That wolde belwe after boles,
 Ne boor after sowe ;
 Bothe hors and houndes,
 And alle othere beestes,
 Medled noght with hir makes
 That with fole were.

Briddes I biheld 7264

That in buskes made nestes, 7265
 Hadde nevere wye wit
 To werche the leeste.
 I hadde wonder at whom
 And wher the pye lerned
 To legge the stikkes
 In whiche she leyeth and bredeth.
 Ther nys wrighte, as I wene,
 Sholde werche hir nestes to paye ;
 If any mason made a molde therto,
 Muche wonder it were.

Ac yet me merveilled moore,
 How many othere briddes
 Hidden and hileden
 Hir egges ful derne
 In mareys and moores,
 For men sholde hem noght fynde ;
 And hidden hir egges,
 Whan thei therfro wente,
 For fere of othere foweles,
 And for wilde beestes.

And some troden hir makes,
 And on trees bredden, 7287
 And broughten forth hir briddes so
 Al above the grounde ;
 And some briddes at the bile
 Thorugh brethyng conceyved ;
 And some caukede ; and took kepe
 How pecokkes bredden.
 Muche merveilled me
 What maister hem made,
 And who taughte hem on trees
 To tymbre so heighe,
 Ther neither burn ne beest 7298

May hir briddes rechen. 7299

And sithen I loked upon the see,
And so forth upon the sterres ;
Manye selkouthes I seigh,
Ben noght to seye nouthe.

I seigh floures in the fryth,
And hir faire colours ;
And how among the grene gras
Growed so manye hewes,
And some soure and some swete,
Selkouth me thoughte ;
Of hir kynde and hir colour 7310
To carpe it were to longe.

Ac that moost meved me
And my mood chaunged,
That Reson rewarded
And ruled alle beestes,
Save man and his make ;
Many tyme and ofte
No reson hem folwede.
And thanne I rebukede
Reson, and right
Til hymselfen I seyde : 7321
“ I have wonder of thee,” quod I,
“ That witty art holden, [make,
Why thow ne sewest man and his
That no mysfeet hem folwe.”

And Reson a-rated me,
And seide, “ Recche thee nevere ;
Why I suffre or noght suffre,
Thiself hast noght to doone.
Amende thow it, if thow myght,
For my tyme is to abide.
Suffraunce is a soverayn vertue,

And a swift vengeance. [quod he ;
Who suffrede moore than God?"

"No gome, as I leeve.

Hemyghte amende in a minute while
Al that mys-standeth ;

Ac he suffreth for som mannes
And so it is oure bettre, [goode,

The wise and the witty
Wroot thus in the Bible :

*De re quæ te non molestat, noli
certare.*

"For be a man fair or foul, 7344
It falleth noght for to lakke

The shap ne the shaft

That God shoop hymselfe ;

For al that he dide was wel y-do,

As holy writ witnesseth :

*Et vidit Deus cuncta quæ fecerat, et
erant valde bona.*

"And bad every creature
In his kynde encrease ;

Al to murthe with man,

That moste wo tholie 7355

In fondynge of the flessch,

And of the fend bothe.

For man was maad of swich a matere,

He may noght wel a-sterre

That ne som tyme hym bitit

To folwen his kynde.

Caton a-cordeth therwith,

Nemo sine crimine vivit."

Tho caughte I colour anoon,

And comsed to ben ashamed,

And awaked therwith. 7366

Wo was me thanne, 7367
 That I in metels ne myghte
 Moore have y-knowen.

And thanne seide I to myself,
 And chidde that tyme, [quod I,
 "Now I woot what Do-wel is,"
 By deere God! as me thynketh.

And as I caste up myne eighen,
 Oon loked on me and asked
 Of me, what thyng it were:

"Y-wis, sire," I seide,
 "To se muche and suffre moore,
 Certes," quod I, "is Do-wel."

"Haddestow suffred," he seide,
 "Slepyng the thow were;
 Thow sholdest have knowen that
 Clergie kan,

And contrevd moore thorough reson.
 For Reson wolde have reherced thee
 Right as Clergie seide;
 Ac for thyn entre-metyng,
 Here artow forsake.

Philosophus esses, si tacuisses. 7388

"Adam, whiles he spak noght,
 Hadde paradis at wille;
 Ac whan he mamelede aboute mete,
 And entre-metede to knowe
 The wisdom and the wit of God,
 He was put fram blisse.

"And right so ferde Reson bi thee;
 Thow with thi rude speche
 Lakkedest and losedest thyng
 That longed the noght to doone.
 Tho hadde he no likyng
 For to lere the moore. 7400

" Pryde now and presumpcion
 Peraventure wol thee appele,
 That Clergie thi compaignye
 Kepeth noght to suwe. [dyng
 Shal nevere chalangynge ne chi-
 Chaste a man so soone,
 As shal shame, and shenden hym,
 And shape hym to amende.
 For lat a dronken daffe
 In a dyk falle,
 Lat hym ligge, loke noght on hym,
 Til hym liste aryse. 7412
 For though Reson rebuked hym
 It were but pure synne. [thanne,
 Ac whan nede nymeth hym up
 For doute lest he sterve,
 And shame shrapeth hise clothes,
 And hise shynes wassheth,
 Thanne woot the dronken daffe
 Wherfore he is to blame."

" Ye siggen sooth," quod I;
 " Ich have y-seyen it ofte,
 Ther smyt no thyng so smerte,
 Ne smelleth so soure,
 As shame, there he sheweth hym;
 For every man hym shonyeth.
 Why ye wisse me thus," quod I,
 " Was for I rebuked Reson."

" Certes," quod he, " that is
 sooth;"
 And shoop hym for to walken.
 And I aroos up right with that,
 And folwed hym after,
 And preyde hym of his curteisie
 To telle me his name. 7434



Passus Duodecimus, etc.

“ I AM Ymaginatif,” quod he,
“ Ydel was I nevere,
Though I sitte by myself,
In siknesse nor in helthe.
I have folwed thee, in feith !
Thise fyve and fourty wynter,
And manye tymes have meved thee
To thynke on thyn ende,
And how fele fernyeres are faren,
And so fewe to come ;
And of thi wilde wantownesse
Tho thou yong were, 7446
To amende it in thi middel age,
Lest myght the failed
In thyn olde elde,
That yvele kan suffre
Poverté or penaunce,
Or preyerés to bidde.
Si non in prima vigilia, nec in se-
cunda, etc. [myght ;
“ Amende thee, while thou
Thou hast ben warned ofte
With poustees of pestilences,
With poverté and with angres ; 7458

And with thise bittre baleises 7459
God beteth his deere children.

Quem diligo, castigo.

“ And David in the Sauter seith
Of swiche that loveth Jhesus :

*Virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me
consolati sunt.* [thi staf,

“ Al though thou strike me with
With stikke or with yerde,
It is but murthe as for me,
To amende my soule. [kynges,
And thou medlest thee with ma-
And myghtest go seye thi Sauter,
And bidde for hem that gyveth thee
Forther are bokes y-knowe [breed,
To telle men what Do-wel is,
Do-bet and Do-best bothe,
And prechours to preven what it is
Of many a peire freres.”

I seigh wel he seide me sooth ;
And som what me to excuse,
Seide Caton confortd me his sone,
That clerk though he were, 7481
To solacen hym som tyme,
As I do whan I make :

*Interpone tuis interdum gaudia cu-
ris.*

“ And of holy men I herde,”
“ How thei outhur while [quod I,
Pleyden the parfiter,
To ben in manye places,
Ac if ther were any wight
That wolde me telle
What were Do-wel and Do-bet 7492

And Do-best at the laste, 7493
 Wolde I nevere do werk,
 But wende to holi chirche,
 And there bidde my bedes,
 But whan ich ete or slepe."

"Poul in his pistle," quod he,
 "Preveth what is Do-wel:
Fides, spes, caritas, et major horum,
etc.

Feith, hope, and charité;
 And alle ben goode,
 And saven men sondry tymes; 7504
 Ac noon so soone as charité.
 For he dooth wel withouten doute,
 That dooth as lewté techeth;
 That is, if thow be man maryed,
 Thi make thow lovyne,
 And lyve forth as lawe wole,
 While ye lyven bothe.

"Right so if thow be religious,
 Ren thow nevere ferther
 To Rome ne to Rochemador,
 But as thi rule techeth; 7515
 And hold thee under obedience,
 That heigh wey is to hevene.

"And if thow be maiden to marye,
 And myght wel continue,
 Seke thow nevere seint ferther
 For no soule helthe.
 For what made Lucifer
 To lese the heighe hevene?
 Or Salomon his sapience,
 Or Sampson his strengthe?
 Job the Jew his joye 7526

Ful deere a-boughte ; 7527
 Aristotle and othere mo,
 Ypocras and Virgile ;
 Alisaundre, that al wan,
 Elengliche ended.

Catel and kynde wit
 Was combraunce to hem alle.

“ Felice hir fairnesse
 Fel hire al to sclaunder ;
 And Rosamounde right so,
 Reufulliche to bileve,
 The beauté of hir body 7538
 In baddenesse she despended.
 Of manye swiche I may rede,
 Of men and of wommen,
 That wise wordes wolde shewe,
 And werche the contrarie.
Sunt homines nequam bene de vir-
tute loquentes.

“ And riche renkes right so
 Gaderen and sparen,
 And tho men that thei moost haten
 Mynistren it at the laste. 7549
 And for thei suffren and see
 So manye nedy folkes,
 And love hem noght as oure Lord
 Thei lesen hir soules. [bit,
Date et dabitur vobis.

“ And richesse right so,
 But if the roote be trewe.
 Ac grace is a gras therof
 Tho grevaunces to abate.
 Ac grace ne groweth noght
 But amonges lowe ; 7560

Pacience and poverte 7561
 The place highte ther it groweth,
 And in lele lyvyng men,
 And in lif holy,
 And thorough the gifte of the Holy
 As the Gospel telleth. [Goost,
Spiritus ubi vult spirat.

“ Clergie and kynde wit
 Cometh of sighte and techyng;
 As the book bereth witness
 To burnes that kan rede.
*Quod scimus loquimur, quod vidimus
 testamur.*

“ Of *quod scimus* cometh clergie
 And konnyng of hevene;
 And of *quod vidimus* cometh kynde
 Of sighte of diverse peple. [wit,
 Ac grace is a gifte of God,
 And of greet love spryngeth;
 Knew nevere clerk how it cometh
 Ne kynde wit the weyes. [forth,
*Nescit aliquis unde venit, aut quo
 vadit, etc.* 7583

“ Ac yet is clergie to comende,
 And kynde wit bothe;
 And namely clergie, for Cristes love
 That of clergie is roote.
 For Moyses witnesseth that God
 For to wisse the peple [wroot
 In the olde lawe, as the lettre telleth,
 That was the lawe of Jewes,
 That what womman were in avoutrye
 Were she riche or poore, [taken,
 With stones men sholde hir strike,

And stone hire to dethe. 7595

“ A womman, as I fynde,
Was gilty of that dede.
Ac Crist of his curteisie
Thorough clergie hir saved ;
And thorough caraces that Crist
The Jewes knewe hemselfe [wroot,
Giltier as a-fore God,
And gretter in synne,
Than the womman that there was,
And wenten away for shame.

“ The clergie that there was,
Conforted the womman.
Holy kirke knoweth this,
That Cristes writyng saved hire.
So clergie is confort
To creatures that repenten,
And to mansede men
Meschief at hire ende.

“ For Goddes body myghte noght
Of breed, withouten clergie ; [ben
The which body is bothe
Boote to the rightfulle, 7617
And deeth and dampnacion
To hem that deyeth yvele,
As Cristes caracte confortede,
And bothe coupable shewed,
The womman that the Jewes
broughte,
That Jhesus thoughte to save.
Nolite judicare, et not judicabimini.
Right so Goddes body, bretheren,
But if it be worthili taken,
Dampneth us at the day of dome,

As the caractes dide the Jewes.

“ For-thi I counseille thee, for
 Cristes sake,
 Clergie that thow lovye.
 For kynde wit is of his kyn,
 And neighe cosynes bothe
 To oure Lord, leve me ;
 For-thi love hem, I rede.
 For bothe ben as mirours
 To amenden oure defautes,
 And lederes for lewed men
 And for lettred bothe. 7638

“ For-thi lakkethow nevere logik,
 Lawe ne hise custumes ;
 Ne countreplede clerkes,
 I counseille thee for evere.
 For as a man may noght see,
 That mysseth hise eighen ;
 Na-moore kan no clerk, [bokes.
 But if he caughte it first thorough
 Al though men made bokes,
 God was the maister,
 And seint spirit the samplarie, 7649
 And seide what men sholde write.

“ Right so ledeth lettrure
 Lewed men to reson ;
 And as a blynd man in bataille
 Bereth wepne to fighte,
 And hath noon hap with his ax
 His enemy to hitte,
 Na-moore kan a kynde witted man,
 But clerkes hym teche,
 Come for al his kynde wit
 To cristendom, and be saved. 7660

Which is the cofre of Cristes tresor,
 And clerkes kepe the keyes
 To unloken it at hir likyng,
 And to the lewed peple
 Gyve mercy for hire mysdedes,
 If men it wolde aske
 Buxomliche and benigueliche,
 And bidden it of Grace.

“ *Archa Dei* in the olde lawe
 Levytes it kepten ;
 Hadde nevere lewed man leve
 To leggen hond on that cheste,
 But he were preest or preestes sone,
 Patriark or prophete.
 For clergie is kepere
 Under Crist of hevene,
 Was ther nevere no knyght,
 But clergie hym made.
 Ac kynde wit cometh
 Of alle kynnes syghtes,
 Of briddes and of beestes,
 Of tastes of truthe and of deceites.

“ Lyveris to-forn us 7683
 Useden to marke
 For selkouthes that thei seighen,
 Hir sones for to teche ;
 And helden it an heigh science
 Hir wittes to knowe.
 Ac thorough hir science soothly
 Was nevere no soule y-saved,
 Ne broght by hir bokes
 To blisse ne to joye ;
 For alle hir kynde knowynges
 Come but of diverse sightes. 7694

“ Patriarkes and prophetes 7695
 Repreveden hir science,
 And seiden hir wordes and hir wis-
 Nas but a folye ; [domes
 And to the clergie of Crist
 Counted it but a truffle.
Sapientia hujus mundi stultitia est
apud Deum.

“ For the heighe Holy Goost
 Hevene shal to-cleve,
 And love shall lepen out after
 Into the lowe erthe ; 7706
 And clennesses shal cacchen it,
 And clerkes shullen it fynde.
Pastores loquebantur ad invicem.

“ He speketh there of riche men
 Ne of right witty, [right noght,
 Ne of lordes that were lewed men,
 But of the hyeste lettred oute.
Ibant magi ab oriente.

“ If any frere were founde there,
 I gyve thee fyve shillynges ;
 Ne in none burgeises cote 7717
 Was that barn born ;
 But in a burgeises place
 Of Bethlem the beste.

Sed non erat ei locus in diversorio, et
pauper non habet diversorium.

“ To pastours and to poetes
 Appered the aungel,
 And bad hem go to Bethlem
 Goddes burthe to honoure ;
 And songe a song of solas,
Gloria in excelsis Deo ! 7728

“ Clerkes knewen it wel, 7729
And comen with hir presentz,
And diden homage honourably
To hym that was almyghty.

“ Why I have told al this,
I took ful good hede
How thow contrariedest Clergie
With crabbede wordes,
How that lewed men lightloker
Than lettrede were saved,
Than clerkes or kynde witted men
Of cristene peple ; 7740
And thow seidest sooth of somme,
Ac se in what manere.

“ Tak two stronge men,
And in Themese cast hem,
And bothe naked as a nedle,
Hir noon sikerer than oother ;
That oon hath konnyng and kan
Swymmen and dyven ;
That oother is lewed of that labour,
That lerned nevere swymme ;
Which trowestow of tho two 7751
That is in moost drede ?
He that nevere ne dyved,
Ne noght kan of swymmyng ?
Or the swymmere that is saaf
By so hymself like,
Ther his felawe fleteth forth
As the flood liketh,
And is in drede to drenche,
That nevere dide swymme ?”

“ That swymme kan noght,” I
“ It semeth to my wittes.” [seide,

“ Right so,” quod the renk, 7763

“ Reson it sheweth,

That he that knoweth clergie

Kan sonner arise

Out of synne, and be saaf,

Though he synne ofte,

If hym liketh and lest,

Than any lewed leelly.

For if the clerk be konnynge,

He knoweth what is synne, [sion

And how contricion withoute confes-

Conforteth the soule; 7774

As thow seest in the Sauter,

In Salmes oon or tweyne,

How contricion is comended,

For it cacheth away synne.

*Beati quorum remissæ sunt iniqui-
tates, et quorum tecta sunt, etc.*

“ And this conforteth ech a clerk,

And covereth hym fro wanhope,

In which flood the fend

Fondeth a man hardest.

Ther the lewed lith stille, 7785

And loketh after lente, [to shrifte,

And hath no contricion er he come

And thanne kan he litel telle,

But as his lores man lereth hym

Bileveth and troweth; [preest,

And that is after person or parissch

The whiche ben peraventure

Unkonnynge to lere lewed men,

As Luc bereth witenesse :

Dum cæcus ducit cæcum, etc.

“ Wo was hym marked 7796

That wade moot with the lewed !
Wel may the barn blesse that man
That hym to book sette.

That lyvyng after lettrure
Saveth hym lif and soule.

Dominus pars hereditatis meæ,

Is a murye verset,
That hath take fro Tybourne
Twenty stronge theves ;
Ther lewed theves ben lolled up,
Loke how thei be saved.

“ The thef that hadde grace of God
On Good-friday, as thow spekest,
Was for he yald hym creaunt to
Crist on the cros,

And knewliched hym guilty,
And grace asked of God,
That to graunten it is redy
To hem that buxomliche biddeth it,
And ben in wille to amenden.
Ac though that theef hadde hevene,
He hadde noon heigh blisse,
As Seint Johan and othere seintes
That deserved hadde better.

“ Right as som man yeve me mete,
And a-mydd the floor sette me,
And hadde mete moore than y-
nough,

Ac noght so muche worshipe
As tho that seten at the syde table,
Or with the sovereynes of the halle ;
But sete as a beggere bord-lees
By myself on the grounde.
So it fareth by that felon

That a Good-Friday was saved.
 He sit neither with Seint Johan,
 Symond ne Jude,
 Ne with maydenes ne with martires,
 Confessours ne wydewes ;
 But by hymself as a soleyne,
 And served on erthe.
 For he that is ones a thef
 Is evere moore in daunger,
 And, as lawe liketh,
 To lyve or to deye.

De peccato propitiato, noli esse sine metu.

And for to serven a seint
 And swich a thef togideres,
 It were neither reson ne right
 To rewarde hem bothe y-liche.

“And right as Trojanus the trewe
 Dwelte noght depe in helle, [knyght
 That oure Lord ne hadde hym lightly
 So leve I the thef be in hevene. [out,
 For he is in the loweste of hevene,
 If oure bileve be trewe ; 7851
 And wel loselly he lolleth there,
 By the lawe of holy chirche.

Qui reddit unicuique juxta opera sua, etc.

“And why that oon theef on the
 Creaunt hym yald [cros
 Rather than that oother theef,
 Though thou woldest appose,
 Alle the clerkes under Crist
 Ne kouthe the skile assoille.

Quare placuit, quia voluit. 7862

“ And so I seye by thee 7863
 That sekest after the whyes,
 And a-resonedest Reson
 A rebukynge as it were ;
 And of the floures in the fryth,
 And of hire faire hewes,
 Wherof thei cacche hir colours
 So clere and so brighte ;
 And willest of briddes and of beestes,
 And of hir bredyng, to knowe,
 Why some be a-lough and some
 Thi likyng it were ; [a-loft,
 And of the stones and of the sterres
 Thow studieth, as I leve ;
 How evere beest outhir brid
 Hath so breme wittes.

“ Clergie ne kynde wit
 Ne knew nevere the cause ;
 Ac kynde knoweth the cause hym-
 And no creature ellis. [self,
 He is the pies patron,
 And putteth it in hir ere
 There the thorn is thikkest 7885
 To buylden and brede.
 And kynde kenned the pecok
 To cauken in swich a kynde ;
 And kenned Adam
 To knowe his pryvé membres,
 And taughte hym and Eve
 To helien hem with leves.

“ Lewed men many tymes
 Maistres thei apposen,
 Why Adam ne hiled noght first
 His mouth that eet the appul, 7896

Rather than his likame a-logh;
 Lewed asken thus clerkes.

“ Kynde knoweth whi he dide so,
 Ac no clerk ellis,
 Ac of briddes and of beestes
 Men by olde tyme
 Ensamples token and termes,
 As telleth the poetes;
 And that the faireste fowel
 Foulest engendreth,
 And feblest fowel of flight is
 That fleeth or swymmeth; 7908
 And that the pecok and the pehen
 Proude riche men bitokneth;
 For the pecok, and men pursue hym,
 May noght flee heighe,
 For the trailynge of his tail
 Overtaken is he soone,
 And his flessch is foul flessch,
 And his feet bothe,
 And un-lovelich of ledene,
 And looth for to here.

“ Right so the riche, 7919
 If he his richesse kepe,
 And deleth it noght til his deeth-
 The tail of alle sorwe [day,
 Right so as the pennes of the pecok
 Peyneth hym in his flight.
 So is possession peyne
 Of pens and of nobles,
 To alle hem that it holdeth,
 Til hir tail be plucked. [thanne,
 “ And though the riche repente
 And bi-rewe the tyme 7930

That evere he gadered so grete,
 And gaf therof so litel ;
 Though he crye to Crist thanne
 With kene wil, I leve,
 His ledene be in oure Lordes ere
 Lik a pies chiteryng.
 And whan his caroyne shal come
 In cave to be buryed,
 I leve it flawme ful foule
 The fold, al aboute,
 And alle the othere ther it lith
 Envenymeth thorough his attre.

“ By the po feet is understande,
 As I have lerned in Avynet,
 Executours false frendes
 That fulfille noght his wille
 That was writen, and thei witnesse
 To werche right as it wolde. [cok
 Thus the poete preveth that the pe-
 For hise fetheres is revered,
 Right so is the riche
 By reson of hise goodes.

“ The larke, that is a lasse fowel,
 Is moore lovelich of ledene,
 And wel a wey of wynges
 Swifter than the pecok,
 And of flessch by fele fold
 Fatter and swetter ;
 To lowe libbynge men
 The larke is resembled.

“ Aristotle the grete clerk
 Swiche tales he telleth.
 Thus he likneth in his logik
 The leeste fowel oute,

And wheither he be saaf or noght
 The sothe woot no clergie, [saaf
 Ne of Sortes ne of Salomon
 No scripture kan telle.

Ac God is so good, I hope,
 That siththe he gaf hem wittes
 To wissen us weyes therwith
 That wissen us to be saved,
 And the bettre for hir bokes
 To bidden we ben holden,
 That God for his grace
 Gyve hir soules reste. 7976

For lettred men were lewed men yet,
 Ne were loore of hir bokes."

"Alle thise clerkes," quod I tho,
 "That in Crist leven,

Seyen in hir sermons
 That neither Sarsens ne Jewes
 Ne no creature of Cristes liknesse
 Withouten cristendom worth saved."

"*Contra*," quod Ymaginatif thoo,
 And comsed for to loure ;

And seide "*Salvabitur* 7987
Vix justus in die judicii.

Ergo salvabitur," quod he,
 And seide na-moore Latyn.

"Trojanus was a trewe knyght,
 And took nevere Cristendom,
 And he is saaf, so seith the book,
 And his soule in hevene.

For ther is fullynge of font,
 And fullynge in blood shedyng,
 And thorough fir is fullyng,
 And that is ferme bileve. 7998

Advenit ignis divinus non comburens, sed illuminans, etc.

“ Ac Truthe that trespassed
nevere,

Ne traversed ayeins his lawe,
But lyveth as his lawe techeth,
And leveth ther be no bettre ;
And if ther were, he wolde amende,
And in swich wille deieth,
Ne wolde nevere trewe god,
But truthe were allowed, [worth,
And wheither it be worth or noght
The bileve is gret of truthe, 8010
And an hope hangynge therinne
To have a mede for his truthe.

For *Deus dicitur quasi dans vitam
eternam suis, hoc est fidelibus.
Et alibi: Si ambulavero in
medio umbræ mortis.*

“ The glose graunteth upon that
A greet mede to Truthe, [vers
And wit and wisdom,” quod that
“ Was som tyme tresor [weye,
Tokepe with a commune, 8021
No catel was holde bettre,
And mucche murthe and manhod ;”
And right with that he vanysshed.



Passus Decimus Tertius, etc.

AND I awaked therwith 8025
Wit-lees ner-hande,
And as a freke that fre were
Forth gan I walke
In manere of a mendinaunt
Many a yer after,
And of this metyng many tyme
Muche thought I hadde.

First how Fortune me failed
At my mooste nede ;
And how that Elde manaced me,
Myghte we evere mete ; 8036
And how that freres folwede
Folk that was riche,
And folk that was povere
At litel pris thei sette ;
And no corps in hir kirk-yerde
Nor in his kirk was buryed,
But quik he biquethe aught
To quyte with hir dettes ;
And how this Coveitise over-com
Clerkes and preestes ;
And how that lewed men ben lad,
But oure Lord hem helpe, 8048

Thorough un-konnynge curatours,
To incurable peynes.

And how that Ymaginatif
In dremels me tolde
Of Kynde and of his konnynge,
And how curteis he is to bestes,
And how lovyng he is to briddes
On londe and on watre.
Leneth he no lif
Lasse ne moore,
The creatures that crepen
Of kynde ben engendred. 8060
And sithen how Ymaginatif seide,
Vix salvabitur ;
And whan he hadde seid so,
How sodeynliche he passed.

I lay down longe in this thoght,
And at the laste I slepte.
And as Crist wolde, ther com Con-
To conforte me that tyme, [science
And bad me come to his court,
With Clergie sholde I dyne ;
And for Conscience of Clergie
I com wel the rather. [spak,
And there I seigh a maister,
What man he was I nyste,
That lowe louted
And loveliche to Scripture.

Conscience knew hym wel,
And welcomed hym faire.
Thei wesshen and wipeden,
And wenten to the dyner.
And Pacience in the paleis stood
In pilgrymes clothes, 8082

And preyde mete *par charité* 8083
For a povere heremyte.

Conscience called hym in,
And curteisliche seide,
“ Welcome ! wye ; go and wasshe ;
Thow shalt sitte soone.”

This maister was maad sitte,
As for the mooste worthi.
And thanne Clergie and Conscience
And Pacience cam after.

Pacience and I
Were put to be macches, 8094
And seten bi oureselve
At the side borde.

Conscience called after mete ;
And thanne cam Scripture,
And served hem thus soone
Of sondry metes manye,
Of Austyn, of Ambrose,
And of the foure Euvangelistes,
*Edentes et bibentes quæ apud eos
sunt.*

Ac this maister nor his man 8105
No maner flesshe eten ;
Ac thei eten mete of moore cost,
Mortrews and potages,
Of that men mys-wonne
Thei made hem wel at ese.
Ac hir sauce was over sour,
And unsavourly grounde
In a mortar *post mortem*
Of many a bitter peyne,
But if thei synge for tho soules,
And wepe salte teris. 8116

*Vos qui peccata hominum comeditis,
nisi pro eis lacrimas et ora-
tiones effunderitis, ea quæ in
deliciis comeditis, in tormentis
evometis.*

Conscience ful curteisly tho
Comaunded Scripture
Bifore Pacience breed to brynge
And me that was his macche.
He sette a sour loof to-forn us,
And seide, "*agite pænitentiam.*"
"As longe," quod I, "as I lyve,
And lycame may dure."
"Here is propre service," quod
Pacience,
"Ther fareth no prince better."
And thanne he broughte us forth
a mees of oother mete,
Of *Miserere mei, Deus*, [*quorum*,
And he broughte us of *Beati*
Of *Beatus-virres* makyng,
Et quorum tecta sunt peccata in a
disshe, [*tibi.*
Of derne shrifte *Dixi et confitebor*
"Bryng Pacience som pitaunce,"
Pryveliche quod Conscience.

And thanne hadde Pacience a
pitaunce,
*Pro hac orabit ad te omnis sanctus
in tempore oportuno.*
And Conscience confortid us,
And carped us murye tales.
*Cor contritum et humiliatum Deus
non despicias.*

Pacience was proud 8147
 Of that propre service,
 And made hym murthe with his
 Ac I mornede evere, [mete;
 For this doctour on the heighe dees
 Drank wyn so faste.

Væ vobis qui potentes estis ad bibendum vinum!

He eet manye sondry metes,
 Mortrews and puddynges,
 Wombe-cloutes and wilde brawen,
 And egges y-fryed with grece.

Thanne seide I to myself so
 Pacience it herde,
 "It is noght foure dayes that this
 Bifore the deen of Poules [freke
 Preched of penaunces
 That Poul the apostle suffrede,
In fame et frigore
 And flappes of scourges."
Ter cæsus sum, et a Judeis quin-
quies quadragenas, etc.

Ac o word thei over-huppen
 At ech a tyme that thei preche,
 That Poul in his Pistle
 To al the peple tolde:
Periculum est in falsis fratribus.

Holi writ bit men be war,
 I wol noght write it here
 In Englisshe, on aventure
 It sholde be reherced to ofte,
 And greve therwith goode men,
 Ac gramariens shul redde.
Unusquisque a fratre se custodiat,

*quia, ut dicitur, periculum
est in falsis fratribus.*

Ac I wiste nevere freke that as
a frere yede

Bifore men on Englisshe
Taken it for his teme,
And telle it withouten glosyng.
They prechen that penaunce is
Profitable to the soule,
And what meschief and *male ese*
Crist for man tholede.

“Ac this Goddes gloton,” quod I,
“With hise grete chekes,
Hath no pité on us povere,
He perfourneth yvele;
That he precheth he preveth noght,”
To Pacience I tolde,
And wisshed ful witterly,
With wille ful egre,
That disshes and doublers
Bifore this ilke doctour
Were molten leed in his mawe,
And Mahoun amyddes. 8202

“I shal jangle to this jurdan
With his juste wombe,
To telle me what penaunce is,
Of which he preched rather.”

Pacience perceyved what I
thoughte,
And wynked on me to be stille,
And seide, “Thow shalt see thus
soone,
Whan he may na-moore,
He shal have a penaunce in his
paunche, 8211

And pufte at ech a worde; 8212
 And thanne shullen his guttes go-
 And he shal galpen after. [thele,
 For now he hath dronken so depe,
 He wole devyne soone,
 And preven it by hir Pocalips
 And passion of seint Avereys,
 That neither bacon ne braun,
 Blancmanger ne mortrews,
 Is neither fissh nor flesshe,
 But fode for a penaunt. [Trinité,
 And thanne shal he testifie of the
 And take his felawe to wnesse,
 What he fond in a frayel,
 After a freres lyvyng;
 And but he first lyve be lesyng,
 Leve me nevere after.

And thanne is tyme to take,
 And to appose this doctour
 Of Do-wel and Do-bet,
 And if Do-wel be any penaunce."

And I sat stille, as Pacience seide,
 And thus soone this doctour, 8234

As rody as a rose,
 Rubbede hise chekes,
 Coughed and carped;
 And Conscience hym herde,
 And tolde hym of a Trinité,
 And toward us he loked. [quod I,
 "What is Do-wel, sire doctour?"
 "Is it any penaunce?"

"Do-wel," quod this doctour,
 And took the cuppe and drank,
 "Is do noon yvel to thyn even-
 cristen 8245

Nought by thi power." [quod I,

"By this day! sire doctour,"

"Thanne be ye noght in Do-wel;

For ye han harmed us two,

In that ye eten the puddyng,

Mortrews and oother mete,

And we no morsel hadde.

And if ye fare so in youre fermerye,

Ferly me thynketh, [be.

But cheeste be ther charité sholde

And yonge children dorste pleyne,

I wolde permute my penaunce with

your,

8257

For I am in point to Do-wel."

Thanne Conscience curteisly

A contenaunce made,

And preynte upon Pacience

To preie me to be stille;

And seide hymself, "Sire doctour,

And it be youre wille,

What is Do-wel and Do-bet,

Ye dyvynours knoweth."

"Do-wel," quod this doctour,

"Do as clerkes techeth;

And Do-bet is he that techeth,

And travailleth to teche othere;

And Do-best doth hymself so,

As he seith and precheth."

Qui facit et docuerit, magnus vocabitur in regno cælorum.

"Now thow, Clergie," quod Con-

"Carpest what is Do-wel. [science,

I have sevene sones," he seide,

"Serven in a castel,

8278

Ther the lord of lif wonyeth, 8279
To leren what is Do-wel ;

Til I se tho sevene
And myself acorde,
I am un-hardy," quod he,
" To any wight to preuen it.
For oon Piers the Plowman
Hath impugned us alle,
And set alle sciences at a sope,
Save love one ;
And no text ne taketh
To mayntene his cause, 8290

But *Dilige Deum*,
And *Domine quis habitabit*.
And seith that Do-wel and Do-bet
Arn two infinités,

Whiche infinités, with a feith!
Fynden out Do-best,
Which shal save mannes soule ;
Thus seith Piers the Plowman."

"I kan noght heron," quod Con-
" Ac I knowe wel Piers ; [science,
He wol noght ayein holy writ
I dar wel undertake. [speken,
Thanne passe we over til Piers come,
And preve this in dede.

Pacience hath be in many place,
And peraunter mouthed
That no clerk ne kan,
As Crist bereth witnesse :

Patientes vincunt, etc." [cience tho,

" Ac youre preiere," quod Pa-
" So no man displese hym.
Disce," quod he, "*Doce*, 8312

Dilige inimicos.

8313

Disce, and Do-wel ;*Doce*, and Do-bet ;*Dilige*, and Do-best ;

Thus taughte me ones

A lemman that I lovede,

Love was hir name : [quod she,

“ With wordes and with werkes,”

“ And wil of thyn herte,

Thow love leelly thi soule

Al thi lif tyme,

And so thow lere the to lovye,

For oure Lordes love of hevene,

Thyn enemy in alle wise

Evene forth with thiselve.

Cast coles on his heed

Of alle kynde speche,

Bothe with werkes and with wordes

Fonde his love to wyne ;

And leye on hym thus with love,

Til he laughe on the.

And but he bowe for this betyng,

Blynd mote he worthe. 8335

“ Ac for to fare thus with thi

Folie it were. [frend,

For he that loveth thee leelly,

Litel of thyne coveiteth.

Kynde love coveiteth noght

No catel but speche.

With half a laumpe lyne,

In Latyn, *Ex vi transitionis*,

I bere therinne aboute

Faste y-bounde Do-wel,

In a signe of the Saterdag 8346

That sette first the kalender, 8347
 And al the wit of the Wodnesday
 Of the nexte wike after,
 The myddel of the moone,
 As the nyght of bothe,
 And herwith am I welcome,
 Ther I have it with me.

“ Undo it, lat this doctour deme
 If Do-wel be therinne.
 For, by hym that me made !
 Myghte nevere poverte
 Misese ne meschief, 8358
 Ne no man with his tonge,
 Coold ne care,
 Ne compaignye of theves,
 Ne neither hete ne hayl,
 Ne noon helle pouke,
 Ne fuyr ne flood,
 Ne feere of thyn enemy,
 Tene thee any tyme,
 And thow take it with the.
Caritas nihil timet, etc.”

“ It is but a dido,” quod this
 “ A disours tale; [doctour,
 Al the wit of this world,
 And wight mennes strengthe,
 Kan noght conformen a pees
 Bitwene and hise enemys,
 Ne bitwene two cristene kynges
 Kan no wight pees make
 Profitable to either peple ;”
 And putte the table fro hym,
 And took Clergie and Conscience
 To conseil, as it were, 8380

That Pacience thow most passe,
For pilgrymes konne wel lye."

Ac Conscience carped loude,
And curteisliche seide,
"Frendes, fareth wel ;"
And faire spak to Clergie,
"For I wol go with this gome,
If God wol yeve me grace,
And be pilgrym with Pacience,
Til I have preved moore."

"What !" quod Clergie to Con-
"Ar ye coveitous nouthe [science,
After yeres-geves or giftes,
Or yernen to rede redels ?
I shal brynge yow a Bible,
A book of the olde lawe,
And lere yow, if yow like,
The leeste point to knowe,
That Pacience the pilgrym
Parfitly knew nevere." [science

"Nay, by Crist !" quod Con-
To Clergie, "God thee for-yelde ;
For al that Pacience me profreth
Proud am I litel.

Ac the wil of the wye,
And the wil of folk here,
Hath meved my mood
To moorne for my synnes.
The goode wil of a wight
Was nevere bought to the fulle.
For ther nys no tresour, for sothe,
To a trewe wille.

"Hadde noght Maudeleyne
For a box of salve, [moore

Than Zacheus for he seide 8415
Dimidium bonorum meorum do
pauperibus?

And the poore widewe
 For a peire of mytes,
 Than alle tho that offrede
 Into *gazophilacium?*"

Thus curteisliche Conscience
 Congeyed first the frere,
 And sithen softeliche he seide
 In Clergies ere,
 "Me were levere, by oure Lord!
 And I lyve sholde,
 Have pacience perfitliche,
 Than half thi pak of bokes."

Clergie of Conscience
 No congie wolde take,
 But seide ful sobreliche,
 "Thow shalt se the tyme
 Whan thow art wery of-walked,
 Wille me to counseille."

"That is sooth," quod Con-
 "So me God helpe! [science,
 If Pacience be oure partyng felawe,
 And pryvé with us bothe,
 Ther nys wo in this world
 That we ne sholde amende,
 And conformen kynges to pees,
 And alle kynnes londes;
 Sarsens and Surré,
 And so forth alle the Jewes,
 Turne into the trewe feith,
 And intil oon bileve."

"That is sooth," quod Clergie,

“ I se what thow menest ; 8449
 I shal dwelle as I do,
 My devoir to shewe,
 And confermen fauntekyns,
 And oother folk y-lered,
 Til Pacience have preved thee,
 And parfit thee maked.”

Conscience tho with Pacience
 Pilgrymes as it were. [passed,
 Thanne hadde Pacience, as pil-
 In his poke vitailles, [grymes han,
 Sobrete and symple speche, 8460
 And soothfast bileve,
 To conforte hym and Conscience,
 If thei come in place
 There un-kyndenesse and coveitise
 Hungry contrees bothe. [is,

And as the wente by the weye,
 Of Do-wel thei carped ;
 Thei mette with a mynstral,
 As me tho thoughte.
 Pacience apposed hym first,
 And preyde he sholde hem telle
 To Conscience what craft he kouthe,
 And to what contree he wolde.

“ I am a mynstrall,” quod that
 “ My name is *Activa-vita* ; [man,
 Al ydelnesse ich hatie,
 For of actif is my name ;
 A wafrer, wol ye wite,
 And serve manye lordes,
 And fewe robes I fonge,
 Or furrede gownes.
 Couthe I lye to do men laughe,

Thanne lacchen I sholde 8483
 Outher mantel or moneie
 Amonges lordes or mynstrals.
 Ac for I kan neither taboure ne
 Ne telle no gestes, [trompe,
 Farten ne fithelen
 At festes, ne harpen,
 Jape ne jogle,
 Ne gentilliche pipe,
 Ne neither saille ne saute,
 Ne synge with the gyterne,
 I have no goode giftes 8494
 Of thise grete lordes.
 For no breed that I brynge forth,
 Save a benyson on the Sondag
 Whan the preest preieth the peple
 Hir pater-noster to bidde
 For Piers the Plowman,
 And that hym profit waiten ;
 And that am I actif,
 That ydelnesse hatie ;
 For alle trewe travaillours
 And tiliers of the erthe, 8505
 Fro Mighelmesse to Mighelmesse
 I fynde hem with my wafres.
 “ Beggeris and bidderis
 Of my breed craven,
 Faitours and freres,
 And folk with brode crounes.
 I fynde payn for the pope,
 And provendre for his palfrey ;
 And I hadde nevere of hym,
 Have God my trouthe !
 Neither provendre ne personage

Yet of popes gifte, 8517
 Save a pardon with a peis of leed
 And two polles amyddes.

Hadde ich a clerik that couthe write,
 I wolde caste hym a bille,
 That he sente me under his seel
 A salve for the pestilence,
 And that his blessynge and hise
 Bocches myghte destruye. [bulles
In nomine meo dæmonia ejicient, et
super ægros manus imponent,
et bene habebunt. 8528

“ And thanne wolde I be prest
 Paast for to make, [to the peple
 And buxom and busy
 Aboute breed and drynke
 For hym and for alle hise,
 Founde I that his pardon
 Mighte lechen a man,
 As I bileve it sholde.
 For sith he hath the power
 That Peter hymself hadde,
 He hath the pot with the salve,
 Soothly as me thynketh.

Argentum et aurum non est mihi ;
quod autem habeo tibi do : in
nomine Domini surge et am-
bula. [faille,

“ Ac if myght of myracle hym
 It is for men ben noght worthi
 To have the grace of God,
 And no gilt of pope.
 For may no blessynge doon us boote,
 But if we wile amende, 8550

Ne mannes masse make pees 8551
 Among cristene peple,
 Til pride be pureliche for-do,
 And thorough payn defaute.
 For er I have breed of mele,
 Ofte moot I swete; [y-nough,
 And er the commune have corn
 Many a cold morwenyng.
 So er my wafres be y-wroght,
 Muche wo I tholye.

“ At Londone, I leve,
 Liketh wel my wafres; 8562
 And louren whan thei lakken hem.
 It is noght longe y-passed,
 There was a careful cōmmune,
 Whan no cart com to towne
 With breed fro Stratforde;
 Tho gonnen beggeris wepe,
 And werkmen were agast a lite;
 This wole be thought longe.
 In the date of oure Drighthe,
 In a drye Aprill,
 A thousand and thre hundred 8573
 Twies twenty and ten,
 My wafres there were gesene
 Whan Chichestre was maire.”

I took good kepe, by Crist!
 And Conscience bothe,
 Of Haukyn the actif man,
 And how he was y-clothed.
 He hadde a cote of Cristendom,
 As holy kirke bileveth;
 Ac it was moled in many places
 With manye sondry plottes; 8584

Of pride here a plot, 8585
 And there a plot of unbuxom speche,
 Of scornynge and of scoffyng,
 And of unskilful berynge,
 As in apparaill and in porte
 Proud amonges^e the peple,
 Oother wise than he hym hath
 With herte or sighte shewynge,
 Hym willyng that alle men wende
 He were that he is noght.
 For-why he bosteth and braggeth
 With manye bolde othes, 8596
 And inobedient to ben undernome
 Of any lif lyvyng,
 And noon so singuler by hymself,
 Ne so pomp holy,
 Y-habited as an heremyte,
 An ordre by hymselfe,
 Religion saunz rule
 Or resonable obedience,
 Lakkyng lettrede men
 And lewed men bothe,
 In likynge of lele lif, 8607
 And a liere in soule,
 With inwit and with outwit
 Ymagynen and studie,
 As best for his body be
 To have a badde name,
 And entremetten hym over al
 Ther he hath noght to doone,
 Willyng that men wende
 His wit were the beste. [gomes,
 And if he gyveth ought to povere
 Telle what he deleth, 8618

Povere of possession in purs 8619
And in cofre bothe.

And as a lyoun on to loke,
And lordlich of speche,
Boldest of beggeris,
A bostere that noght hath,
In towne and in tavernes

Tales to telle, [seigh,
And segge thyng that he nevere
And for sothe sweren it,
Of dedes that he nevere dide

Demen and bosten, 8630
And of werkes that he wel dide
Witnesse, and siggen—

“Lo! if ye leve me noght,

Or that I lye wenen,
Asketh at hym or at hym,

And he yow kan telle
What I suffrede and seigh

And som tymes hadde,
And what I kouthe and knew,
And what kyn I com of.”

Al he wolde that men wiste 8641
Of werkes and of wordes

Which myghte plese the peple,
And preisen hymselfe.

*Si hominibus placerem, Christi
servus non essem. Et alibi:
Nemo potest duobus dominis
servire.*

“By Crist!” quod Conscience
“Thi beste cote, Haukyn, [tho,
Hath manye moles and spottes,
It moste ben y-wasshe.” 8652

“Ye, who so toke hede,” quod
 “Bihynde and bifore, [Haukyn,
 What on bak and what on body half,
 And by the two sydes,
 Men sholde fynde manye frounces,
 And manye foule plottes.”

And he torned hym as tyd,
 And thanne took I hede,
 It was fouler bi fele fold
 Than it first semed.
 It was bi-dropped with wrathe
 And wikkede wille, 8664
 With envye and yvel speche,
 Entisyng to fighte,
 Liynge and laughynge,
 And leve tonge to chide,
 Al that he wiste wikked
 By any wight tellen it,
 And blame men bihynde hir bak,
 And bidden hem meschaunce,
 And that he wiste by Wille
 Tellen it Watte,
 And that Watte wiste 8675
 Wille wiste it after,
 And made of frendes foes
 Thorugh a fals tonge,
 Or with myght or with mouth,
 Or thorough mennes strengthe
 Avenge me fele tymes,
 Other frete myselve
 Withinne as a shepsteres shere,
 Y-sherewed man and cursed.
*Cujus maledictione os plenum est
 et amaritudine, sub lingua ejus*

*labor et dolor. Et alibi: Filii
hominum, dentes eorum arma
et sagittæ, et lingua eorum
gladius acutus.*

“ Ther is no lif that me loveth
Lastynge any while ;
For tales that I telle,
No man trusteth to me.
And whan I may noght have the
Swich malencolie I take, [maistrie,
That I cacche the crampe,
And the cardiacle som tyme, 8698
Or an ague in swich an angre,
And som tyme a fevere
That taketh me al a twelve monthe,
Til that I despise
Lechecraft of oure Lord,
And leve on a wicche,
And seye that no clerc ne kan,
Ne Crist, as I leve,
To the Soutere of Southwerk,
Or of Shordyche dame Emme ;
And seye that no Goddes word
Gaf me nevere boote,
But thorough a charme hadde I
And my chief heele.” [chaunce
I waitede wisloker,
And thanne was it soiled
With likynge of lecherie,
As by lokynge of his eighe.
For ech a maide that he mette
He made hire a signe
Semyng to synnewarde,
And some tyme he gan taste 8720

Aboute the mouth, or bynethe 8721
 Bigynneth to grope,
 Til eitheres wille wexeth kene,
 And to the werke yeden,
 As wel in fastyng dayes and Fridaies
 As forboden nyghtes,
 And as wel in Lente as out of Lente,
 Alle tymes y-liche.
 Swiche werkes with hem
 Were nevere out of seson,
 Til thei myghte na-moore ;
 And thanne murye tales, 8732
 And how that lecchours lovye
 Laughen and jopen,
 And of hir harlotrye and horedom
 In hir elde tellen.

Thanne Pacience perceyved
 Of pointes of this cote,
 That were colomy thorough coveitise
 And unkynde desiryng ;
 Moore to good than to God
 The gome his love caste,
 And ymagynede how 8743
 He it myghte have
 With false mesures and met,
 And with fals witnesse ;
 Lened for love of the wed,
 And looth to do truthe ;
 And awaited thorough which
 Wey to bigile,
 And menged his marchaundise,
 And made a good moustre ;
 " The worste withinne was,
 A greet wit I let it, 8754

And if my neghebore hadde any
 Or any beest ellis, [hyne,
 Moore profitable than myn,
 Many sleightes I made
 How I myghte have it,
 Al my wit I caste.

And but I it hadde by oother wey,
 At the laste I stale it;
 Or priveliche his purs shook,
 And unpikede hise lokes;
 Or by nyghte or by daye
 Aboute was ich evere, 8766
 Thorugh gile to gaderen
 The good that ich have.

“ If I yede to the plowgh,
 I pynched so narwe,
 That a foot lond or a forow
 Fecchen I wolde
 Of my nexte neghebore,
 And nymen of his erthe.
 And if I repe, over-reche,
 Or yaf hem reed that ropen
 To seise to me with hir sikel 8777
 That I ne sew nevere.

“ And who so borwed of me,
 A-boughte the tyme
 With presentes prively,
 Or paide som cêrteyn;
 So he wolde or noght wolde,
 Wynnen I wolde,
 And bothe to kith and to kyn
 Unkynde of that ich hadde.

“ And who so cheped my chaffare,
 Chiden I wolde, 8788

But he profrede to paie 8789
 A peny or tweyne
 Moore than it was worth;
 And yet wolde I swere
 That it coste me muche moore,
 And so swoor manye othes.

“ On haly daies at holy chirche
 Whan ich herde masse,
 Hadde I nevere wille, woot God,
 Witterly to biseche
 Mercy for my mysdedes,
 That I ne moorned moore 8800
 For losse of good, leve me,
 Than for my likames giltes.
 As if I hadde dedly synne doon,
 I dredde noght that so soore,
 As when I lened, and leved it lost,
 Or longe er it were paid.
 So if I kidde any kyndenesse
 Myn even cristen to helpe,
 Upon a cruwel coveitise
 Myn herte gan hange.

“ And if I sente over see 8811
 My servauntz to Brugges,
 Or into Puce-lond my prentis,
 My profit to waiten,
 To marchaunden with moneie,
 And maken hire eschaunges,
 Mighte nevere me conforte
 In the mene while
 Neither masse ne matynes,
 Ne none maner sightes;
 Ne nevere penaunce perfournede,
 Ne pater-noster seide, 8822

That my mynde ne was moore 8823
 On my good in a doute,
 Than in the grace of God,
 And hise grete helpes.

Ubi thesaurus tuus, ibi et cor tuum.

“ Whiche ben the braunches
 That bryngen a man to sleuthe?
 He that moorneth noght for hise
 Ne maketh no sorwe, [mysdedes,
 And penaunce that the preest en-
 Perfourneth yvele, [joyneth
 Dooth noon almesse, 8834
 Dred hym of no synne,
 Lyveth ayein the bileve,
 And no lawe holdeth,
 Ech day is holy day with hym,
 Or an heigh ferye ;
 And, if he aught wole here,
 It is an harlotes tonge.
 Whan men carpen of Crist,
 Or of clenness of soules, [here
 He wexeth wroth and wol noght
 But wordes of murthe ; 8845
 Penaunce of povere men,
 And the passion of seintes,
 He hateth to here therof,
 And alle that it telleth.
 Thise ben the braunches, beth war,
 That bryngen a man to wanhope.

“ Ye lordes and ladies,
 And legates of holy chirche,
 That fedeth fooles sages,
 Flatereris and lieris,
 And han likynge to lithen hem

To do yow to laughe, 8857
Væ vobis qui ridetis, etc.

And gyveth hem mete and mede,
 And povere men refuse;
 In youre deeth deyinge,
 I drede me ful soore
 Lest tho thre maner men
 To muche sorwe yow brynge.

*Consentientes et agentes pari pœna
 punientur.*

“ Patriarkes and prophetes,
 And prechours of Goddes wordes,
 Saven thorough hir sermons
 Mannes soule fro helle.
 Right so flatereris and fooles
 Arn the fendes disciples
 To entice men thorough hir tales
 To synne and to harlotrie.
 Ac clerkes, that knowen holy writ,
 Sholde kenne lordes
 What David seith of swiche men,
 As the sauter telleth.

*Non habitabit in medio domus meæ,
 qui facit superbiam, et qui
 loquitur iniqua.*

“ Sholde noon harlot have au-
 In halle nor in chambre, [dience
 Ther wise men were,
 Witnesseth Goddes wordes,
 Ne no mys-proud man
 Amonges lordes ben allowed.

“ Ac flaterers and fooles
 Thorough hir foule wordes
 Leden tho that loven hem 8890

To Luciferis feste, 8891
With *Turpiloquio*, a lady of sorwe,
And Luciferis fithеле.”
Thus Haukyn the actif man
Hadde y-soiled his cote,
Til Conscience acouped hym therof
In a curteis manere,
Why he ne hadde whasshen it,
Or wiped it with a brusshe. 8899







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